

***PNCC Future Direction November 2019 Message:
Following in their Footsteps***

As we begin November with the Solemnity of All Saints, we have the example of all the Saints to serve as an example for us as we continue to become more faithful disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thanks to Rev. Scott J. Lill for this month's message: Following in their Footsteps.



There is a beautiful 2-mile walking trail that gracefully loops around the little league and softball fields in the middle of our small town. Wide enough for pedestrians and bicyclists to comfortably pass each other while exchanging greetings and sometimes much needed encouragement, the track is covered by soft gravel that's easy on the knees even when one is ascending the mercifully designed gradual slopes that make up part of the terrain. Sections of it move into beautiful wooded areas, and there are even a few small streams that flow beside the heavily frequented pathway which, on days heavy with rain, sometimes spill out onto the pathway and cause little, easily avoided puddles. The trail is richly adorned by a wonderful variety of trees which, towering above, provide the beautiful blossoming of hope in the springtime, much needed shade in the heat of summer, and a splendid burst of color in the autumn. It really is as idyllic as I describe, so there is little wonder that it is so heavily used by both townsfolk and visitors from around the greater area who make regularly scheduled use of the walking trail...during about 75% of the year.

Winter here is a *much* different story. The only thing that slumbers more deeply than nature itself is the collective motivation of the aforementioned walkers who do their best to somehow stay active inside their houses and batten down the hatches until late March. Until then, our beautiful walking trail is buried under inches, and many times feet, of heavy snow this is still somehow driven around by the bone-chilling winds that help make our pathway pretty much impassable. I learned this lesson the hard way a few years ago on a particular January 2nd, when I, as yet still ardently committed to my one day old resolution, bundled up and ventured out into the cold of the early morning and headed down the freshly plowed street to an entry onto the walking trail. Convinced that my boots and 2 pairs of thick socks would keep my feet warm and dry and somehow empower me to boldly trudge along, I drew a deep breath, stepped over the almost waist-high bank freshly made by the plow and right down into the almost knee-high snow of the pathway. I had two immediate realizations. The first was “wow, am I an idiot,” and the second was “someone else has already been here this morning.” I was amazed that the tracks of this person started at a point further down the path from me and then moved further up the pathway than I could see, such that I could make them out both behind me and in front of me.

Wondering whether I should just acknowledge failure, climb back over the snowbank and skulk back home, I had to make a quick decision. Still believing—although *much less* fervently—that this was still a tolerable idea and not wanting to be shown up, I decided to move ahead. After ten incredibly challenging steps, I did what seemed most reasonable: I started walking in the footprints already made by my predecessor. Moving ahead about another 30 yards, each step now somewhat easier but by no means easy, I slogged along by walking where another, under the same difficult conditions, had walked before me with a greater degree of success than I. Already cold and out of breath by then, I rationalized that this wasn't actually a bad effort for the second day and, finding a point where I could more easily leave the walking trail, I rolled over the snowbank, back onto the street and headed home, giving one final look toward the trail that had bested me, but not the one who walked before me as evidenced by the footprints moving further along than I had that day. I would later find out that this had been one of my parishioners and that both she *and her dog* had made it all the way around!)

On the first day of this month of November, we honor all of God's Saints. In venerating them, we are really worshipping the One who called them by name and who abundantly bestowed the grace to respond and follow, whose holiness radiates from within them and who now holds them up as role models for us. In his Incarnation, his teaching and ministry, and Passion, Death and Resurrection, our Lord Jesus revealed Himself as the only pathway that leads to his Kingdom. His Saints are the ones who have already faithfully followed Him and, in their turn, have left their mark, their footprints if you will, upon the life of the Church. They have shown us what authentic, consistent discipleship looks like and now they invite us to join them on the way.

Sometimes it's easier, perhaps even pleasant, to walk the way of discipleship when the conditions are favorable, sort of like our town's walking trail much of the year. But, what about when things turn gloomy out ahead of us and yet we are still called to follow? What do we do when the storm clouds of life roll in heavily upon us and our families in the form of financial struggle or social alienation and yet the pathway is laid out before us? What about when the chilling winds of persecution arise and begin to buffet against us, and we are still called to follow in the face of them? How can we possibly continue when we become mired down by sickness and suffering and even death itself or when the pathway is blocked by our own failings or sense of unworthiness? What can we do when we just find the journey too taxing and deem it impossible to carry our own crosses one more step and are on the verge of just surrendering? It is *especially* at these times that we can look to the Saints who have faithfully journeyed with Christ, have now finished the course and have been led by Him into eternal glory. They understand quite well the challenges of our journey, for they "are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

The Saints were once who we are now, and they are now who we hope to be. They wait for us now at the end of the pathway, and led by the Mother of God they pray that our Lord will bestow the Gifts of the Holy Spirit needed for us to follow in their footsteps, obediently going as far as our Lord asks us, progressing a little further each day and persevering even when the pathway is difficult to traverse. So, let us pay them the greatest measure of veneration by emulating their examples so that, in time, we may join them within the "great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue...wearing white robes and holding palm branches..." and crying out "in a loud voice: Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb!" (7:9-10).

We congratulate Very Rev. Jaroslav Rafalko who was elected as a candidate for bishop at the PNCC Special Synod on October 25th. Also, congratulations to Very Rev. Ottar Myrseth who was elected as a candidate for bishop at the Synod of the Nordic Catholic Church. Please keep both of these Bishops-Elect in your prayers.

Please keep this church-wide undertaking in your daily prayers – asking God to bless this work and allow it to bear fruit for the building of His Kingdom through our Holy Church. Let us follow the example of the saints we continue to become more faithful and ardent disciples of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

PNCC Supreme Council Future Direction Committee

Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, *Prime Bishop* Very Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich Jr., *Chairman*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>November 2019</h1>					"To become a saint is to be made holy by God. It is to be sanctified, set apart for God..."	...purified by the cleansing and re-creating gift of his Spirit, all made possible by the mystery
Eastern Diocese PNCC Mission / Evangelism Prayer: The Example of Saints and Giving Thanks						
of the life of Christ. It is to live one's life in union with the will of God. " (F. Bartels)	May God's Word, sown in our hearts, blossom and bear fruit in every good work...	...May our hearts be strengthened by eternal comfort & good hope. ~ <i>At Home w/the Word</i>	"Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works..."	...and give glory to your Father in heaven." (See Matthew 5:14-16)	1 ALL SAINTS Give thanks to God for those whose lives are examples of our hope.	2 ALL SOULS - Pray for those you love and remember, and pray for those souls known only to God.
3 Jesus calls you by name, as He called Zacchaeus. Invite Him to your home. (Luke 19:1-10)	4 With God's help may we live the faith we profess & trust His promise of eternal life (LH)	5 Pray for all who are in authority - this pleases God our Savior. (See 1 Timothy 2:1-3)	6 Trust Jesus to carry your burdens and show you what love and courage mean (Lk.14:25-33)	7 Pray for those who have walked away from faith. God will draw them back.	8 "In a spirit of hope and out of love for Him, let us bear and endure all things..."	9...and give thanks for everything that befalls us..." ~St. Gregory Nazianzen, bishop (329-390 AD)
10 How does belief in your personal resurrection give meaning to your life? (See Luke 20)	11 VETERANS' DAY Do something to honor those who have defended our nation.	12 "When I forgive, I must bury the hatchet without marking the spot." (<i>Sacred Space</i>)	13 (Luke 17:11-19) Remember to take time and thank God for blessings you have received.	14 Trust God to intervene in making a better world. Allow Him to work through you.	15 "Be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray... Love each other deeply." (1 Peter 4)	16 Keep yourselves in God's love...await the mercy of Jesus which leads to eternal life (Jude 21)
17 Share the hope you have in Christ with someone who is hurting. Be Jesus' hands and feet.	18 Luke 18:35-43 Jesus responded to the blind man's need. Call on Him in faith today.	19 Jesus came to seek & save the lost. Share His love with someone who needs it today.	20 Don't let fear hold you back from doing what God is directing you to do. He will help you.	21 Invite someone who is alone to share in your Thanksgiving Day celebration.	22 Ask your pastor how you can lend a hand during the busy weeks ahead.	23 "You have made us for Yourself, Lord; our heart can find no rest until it rests in You." ~Augustine
24 King Jesus , may Your will be done in my heart, my home, my parish, and in Your world!	25 Make me aware of the small things I can do, Lord, to make life better for someone today.	26 Increase our eagerness to do Your will ; help us to know the saving power of Your love	27 Pray for those who suffer because they follow Jesus; may they remain strong in faith .	28 Let us run the race that is before us and never give up - the saints are cheering us on!	29 "Banish the fear of death and think of the eternal life that follows it. That will show people..."	30 ...that we really live our faith. " ~ St. Cyprian, bishop (200-258 AD)