

Feast of All Saints - 2017 - AS/IC

Thomas Merton was one of the most influential American Catholic authors of the twentieth century. Shortly after he was converted to Catholicism in the late 1930s, Thomas Merton was walking down the streets of New York with a friend, Robert Lax. Lax was Jewish, and he asked Thomas what he wanted to be, now that he was Catholic. "I don't know." Merton replied, adding simply that he wanted to be a good Catholic.

Lax stopped him in his tracks. "What you should say," he told him, "is that you want to be a saint!" Merton was dumbfounded. "How do you expect me to be a saint?" Merton asked him. Lax said: "All that is necessary to be a saint is to want to be one.

Don't you believe that God will make you what He created you to be, if you consent to let him do it? All you have is to desire it." Thomas Merton knew his friend was right. (John Payappilly in *The Table of the Word*; quoted by Fr. Kayala).

In their footsteps: St Jerome says in his writings that as a boy he and his friends used to play in the catacombs. Centuries after St Jerome, Roman boys still played in the catacombs.

One day a group of boys was wandering through the maze of tunnels. Suddenly their only flashlight gave out. The boys were trapped in total darkness with no idea of the way out. They were on the verge of panic when one boy felt a smooth groove in the rock floor of the tunnel.

It turned out to be a path that had been worn smooth by the feet of thousands of Christians in the days of the Roman persecutions. The boys followed in the footsteps of these saints of old and found their way out of the darkness into sunlight and safety.

(Mark Link in *Sunday Homilies*; quote by Fr. Kayala).