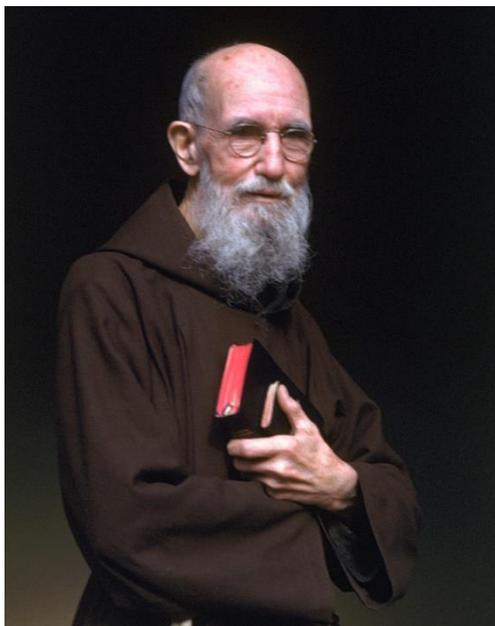


Ahead of Time

Turkey, pie, football, family, and giving thanks: these are the hallmarks of the present season.

Earlier this month, Father Solanus Casey, a Capuchin monk from Detroit, was beatified. Blessed Solanus Casey was born in Wisconsin and spent his priestly years serving the city of Detroit. Having died in 1957, there are countless people still alive with personal encounters with this man who is now one step away from being declared a saint.



As a proud Midwesterner and lifelong Catholic, I feel compelled to learn a bit more about the life of this humble, holy man. As I've perused articles and read quotations, one of his statements stuck with me more than the rest:

"Thank God ahead of time."

What a simple statement. What a profound statement! Did Blessed Solanus Casey perhaps give us the key to St. Paul's call to "in all circumstances give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18)? I don't know about you, but that calling to constant gratitude has always been a tough one for me. Maybe this seemingly ordinary man, born on a Wisconsin farm and educated in Milwaukee before joining the Capuchin Franciscan order in Detroit, maybe this man figured it out.

How might our hearts change if we gave God our gratitude for what is to come? Joys and sorrows we don't know yet; opportunities and trials unseen around the corner; the good and the bad that will invariably make up our days this side of heaven. If we thank God for it all beforehand, genuinely and from the heart, will our experiences of those events be different once they do arrive? My guess is, yes.

Gratitude always changes our hearts for the better. We are often able to look back on the ups and downs with thanksgiving after we've come through to the other side. Experience gives us a tad more wisdom and we then recognize the hand of God in our lives after the fact. This has been my usual way of approaching giving thanks in everything, as it likely has been for many of you.

Gratitude experienced in our souls and offered to God ahead of time though would change our hearts ahead of time too. It would give us clarity and wisdom going into the ups and downs, instead of only after. It would fortify us for the things to come.

What better time than now to begin developing this new habit recommended by our homegrown saint-to-be, to *thank God ahead of time*.

May you and your dear ones have a blessed Thanksgiving and a joyful start to Advent!

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November 14, 2017

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