

Though they of course all have different stories, one of the things that the saints share is that all of them have a complete trust in God as in control of all of their lives.

St. John of the Cross, on being informed by the cook in his monastery that there was no food for the following day, answered, “Leave to God the care of providing food. Tomorrow is far enough off; He is well able to take care of us.” The next morning there was still no food — until a wealthy benefactor came to the door. He explained that he had dreamed the previous night that the monks might be in need and had brought enough food and supplies to sustain them, just in case that was so.

In the early nineteenth century, Blessed Anne-Marie Jahouvey established a religious congregation, over the strong objections of her father. She and the other sisters were running an orphanage, and when they ran out of money for food one day, Anne-Marie went into church to pray: “I need help. I know that I have been imprudent, and perhaps I have gone beyond Your will in many ways. But I have done it for the children. They are more Yours than they are mine. If I have made mistakes, punish me — not them. I beg You, don’t forsake them. Please, please help.” Anne-Marie then heard the

voice of the Lord clearly: “Why have you come here to expose your doubts? Have you no faith in me? Have I ever disappointed you? Go back to the children.” There with a wagonload of food was her father, who said, “I don’t know why I am doing this, but I suppose I can’t let you starve.” Anne-Marie realized that God had not only tested her faith, but had also confirmed His loving care for her — for indeed, moving her unwilling father to bring assistance for all the orphans and sisters was perhaps a greater miracle than if He had stocked the pantry shelves with food suddenly created out of nothing.

St. John Bosco amazed many people by managing to care for a large number of orphans and other boys apparently without sufficient resources. Each time his assistants told him that dire financial problems could no longer be put off, he assured them, “God will provide” — and in every instance, he was right.

And then there is Saint John Henry Newman. John Henry Newman was the oldest of six children born to a middle class Protestant English family in 1801. He entered Oxford at the age of 15, and was ordained as an Anglican at 23. Newman was raised to believe that the Catholic Church

was evil. In 1836, he began to edit an English version of the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Little by little, his objections to Roman Catholicism were breaking down under this extended examination. He was coming to see it as the true faith taught by the apostles. In 1843, he left his position at his church to spend more time in prayer and study. At age 44 in 1845, John Henry Newman was received into the Catholic Church, making great personal sacrifices. He gave up a comfortable position and many lifelong relationships which were abruptly ended. During his early years as a Catholic, former colleagues called him a traitor and many Catholics considered him a closet Protestant.

According to St. Albert the Great, "The greater and more persistent your confidence in God, the more abundantly you will receive all that you ask." This point is echoed by St. Teresa of Avila, who reassures us, "God is full of compassion and never fails those who are afflicted and despised, if they trust in Him alone."

"In God We Trust" is a statement hopefully we agree with. But if we were honest with ourselves, might it not be the case that sometimes we have a hard time really doing that? Not only can it be difficult to trust God in trying

times, but we can also keep God out of certain parts of our life, and think that God applies to Sundays, but then not think of Him the rest of the week or think that He should apply to the other parts of our life. What the saints do is not only worship God, but have such a deep relationship with God that their entire lives are transformed and center around that.

This week we celebrate the feast of Christ the King, which ends the Liturgical Year. In it we celebrate how Christ is the King of the Universe, and this theme fills our readings this week. In our second reading, we hear the words: “To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, who has made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father, to him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen. Behold, he is coming amid the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him.” And in the Gospel, Jesus says to Pilate: “Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” The saints realize they are subjects in God’s Kingdom and serve Him alone as King. They realized what Pilate could not: that one has to listen to the voice of God. How then does one do that?

What it comes down to is not inviting Jesus into just part of you, but all of you. To be a part of every aspect of our lives.

A starting point is realizing that God is not there to condemn, but to help us. He does that through His mercy, which is always given to us - but we should ask for it. Remember our King did not come to get revenge for how humanity had acted; He came and when we as humans killed Him, He still freely laid down his life. His love is always there for us. So this means we need to go to confession, to make an act of contrition and not neglect sin in our lives by turning it over to Him.

We find the areas for growth in our life by then looking at where in our life the King needs to come. What I'm getting at here is something that Bishop Robert Barron stressed in talking about this feast, and that is namely if Christ is the King and we serve Him and He also serves us, we can't bracket part of our lives and have Christ not be a part of it.

For one, our family. How do we treat others in the family? Do we treat others with love and respect, or do we put others down or become verbally abusive? Do you fight all the time or do you manipulate your siblings? If you are a parent do you live out your own dreams through your children or force things upon them? If you are still growing up at home do you help out

around the house or do things without being asked? If you are married do you recognize your spouse as your equal partner and share responsibility? Do you look for ways to show love to others? Do you say “I’m sorry” to your family when you make a mistake?

Christ also must be King over our sexual desires. Sensualism is everywhere, on phones, on the computer, in media. The body is beautiful, which is why it is depicted in so many classic works of art. But it also abused. If Christ is King in this area of my life, it means we own up if there is a problem and ask for His help. It means we understand what it means to love others by not engaging in certain actions that abuse the body by dividing body and soul. Remember desires, thoughts and temptations are normal; they are a part of life, but the virtue of temperance helps us to control these things by looking at all people through the eyes of Jesus, who always saw not just the outside but the inside.

Most of us do not work at a Church, but we need to also bring Christ into the workplace. There are certain places like an abortion clinic where a Catholic could not work. But in the workplace, if there is something unethical going on, if Christ is with us as our King our conscience will tell us we can’t be a part of it, or need to alert someone. Perhaps you can put a

cross or some religious object at a work station; or offer to pray for someone if they are going through something difficult. Or you are at lunch and someone sees you have a cross or a medal and they ask you a question about the faith, you can be prepared to answer it. These are all ways we can bring Jesus into the workplace.

Then there is our personal life. As Bishop Baron put it, you should be comfortable doing all you do privately with Jesus watching. There are many things that are not sinful that people enjoy for instance such as our hobbies. Most us aren't praying during them or wouldn't think of Jesus as being there with us at that moment. But remember He is with us always. Sometimes we can put on a "public" face and then have our "private" life. In my private life, I enjoy photography. I enjoy playing poker every so often. I enjoy travel. I enjoy watching sports. But I know there are things that have also occurred like in every human's life that were wrong and I've brought them to confession. A help in combating sin and temptations though can be to think of Jesus as not over there the church or up in heaven, but right with us in the car, in the home, on the vacation, and asking for His help when we are tempted to cross a line. A person can become addicted to some type of sin in their personal life and have it hidden from others, but there's

no hiding from Christ. Rather than being silent, ask for His help and own up to the fact by being honest with yourself if you are being intemperate or imprudent in not acknowledging a sin.

If Christ is King in our lives, we also want to talk to Him and come to know Him. So go to Mass regularly, and make time for prayer each day. Look too for opportunities to read about the faith so you can understand it better and have conversations with others who may ask you questions about our faith.

God loves us so much, but that love requires a response too. For some the faith can become going to Mass once a week, and for many more going once or twice a year. God seems so far out there and the here and now is the money, the sports, the school, the career, the pleasures of life. So many of the saints had families who thought that way. Thomas Aquinas' family had him locked in a tower for a year and tried to have him tempted to leave the Dominicans. Francis Assisi's father wanted him to focus on selling cloths and other garments like he had done. Catherine of Sienna's parents wanted her to get married and not become a nun. But what all of these saints and so many others did was to see Jesus as King over every aspect of their lives. They let Him into every single part of their lives, grew

in coming to know Him, and then through how they lived brought Him into this world so others too would come to know this King who is love.

So as we prepare to encounter our King in Holy Communion, may we be reminded that Jesus wants to be with us, not just now but always. He's not a president or someone we vote in; He's not someone waiting there in heaven until we see Him one day - He is King forever and ever. One day we'll see Him face to face, but until that day we are not alone. So don't shut Him out of parts of your life. As we consume His Body, let's welcome Him into not just part of our lives, but our entire souls knowing that when we do so, we can be transformed by His love, if only we open the door and let Him in.