

*What matters is what you do in this world, not how you came into it, she (Eliza) used to say to Tao Chi'en..."*

*He, however, did not agree. It was impossible for him to imagine his own life apart from the long chain of his ancestors, who had not only given him his physical and mental characteristics but bequeathed him his karma. (Daughter of Fortune, Isabel Allende)*

As October opens I think of the end of this month when we celebrate Halloween, originally an eve when Christian folks dressed like the canonized saints in remembrance of their good qualities. During this time they felt especially close to those who had died.

We currently honor the saints on November 1st, All Saints Day. I draw inspiration and encouragement not only from the saints the Church officially recognizes but all those virtuous people who touched my life with their goodness: relatives, friends, teachers, authors, spiritual directors, and numerous others.

As I grow older the list grows longer. In past Octobers I've developed the practice of writing down one of these names each day, creating my own litany of saints.

I take time to reflect on his or her personal qualities and how I have been affected by this legacy. As I ponder their good qualities, I pray these same virtues might strengthen in me.

This spiritual practice rekindles my desire to live the best of who I can be.

Perhaps you might consider creating your own "litany of saints" this month. Even if you do not have any deceased relatives you want to emulate, if you look back on your life you will find others whose goodness influenced and led you to be who you are today. Here is a prayer of mine that can be prayed daily.

Spirit of my ancestors,  
this day I join in acknowledging the blessedness of the many  
who inspired me and shaped my faith.

I turn in memory and appreciation  
toward those ancestors in my family of origin  
who influenced and encouraged me to live as my best self.  
I bring to mind others who enriched my life  
and led me further on my journey of personal transformation.

I honour all those who sacrificed and suffered  
in order for peace and justice to be furthered on our planet.

I give thanks and rejoice for the countless, unnamed persons  
those goodness left a lasting mark of kindness and compassion.

May the remembrance of each of these blessed ones  
deepen my personal commitment  
to leave a trace of goodness wherever I go.

When I depart this sphere of life may I do so  
having contributed to individual and world peace.  
Abundant peace.

*Joyce Rupp*