

Reflection on the Remembrance of the Deceased Sisters and Brothers of the Order

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What could be more intimate than to overhear a person's personal conversation with their loved one, especially their personal prayer to God? What could be more poignant than hearing the words of a loved one who's about to die? And how moving beyond words to hear that friend praying *for you* at that time? And isn't that what we were just privileged to experience?

Jesus prayed on that Thursday night that we may be kept from the evil one, that we may be consecrated in truth, be one as the Father and Jesus are one, and that the Love with which Abba loved Jesus would be in us. Wow! And we commemorate today our Dominican Sisters and Brothers who have transitioned from this life into the fullness of that Love, where we trust they now see the glorified Christ face to face.

As Jesus thought of those who would believe in Him, he said: "Father, they are your gift to me." Who are some of our deceased Dominican Sisters and Brothers who have witnessed to God's Love and been God's gift to you?

A few years ago, I attended a workshop by Sister Barbara Fiand. The audience was quite energized by her theological overview of the new cosmology until she said: "Now, don't think that your mission and ministry is over once you die. No, we are all connected and we will continue to love and be concerned until *all* have accepted God's Kingdom and God's Will."

This really upset the group, who so looked forward to just reveling and resting in God's Presence after death. No work, not even the work of love! But love must always reach outward, especially from the other side.

On this Election Day, it can be a real source of encouragement and inspiration to believe that the Communion of Saints are still lovingly at work, interceding for our nation and for each of us. God's Love in Dominic, in our Catherine, in our Martin and Rose, in our Mother Gerald, Mother Francis Miller (Edmonds) and Mary Phillip, yes, in our Rosemarie, and all those you named, that love is still very alive and effective.

Our deceased Dominican Sisters and brothers heard those words from Revelation, and, most likely, found in them the source of great encouragement as they faced their own tumultuous times: "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. God will dwell with them and they will be God's people, and the God-self *will always* be with them as their God." I believe our deceased Dominicans are saying today: Believe that truth; trust that truth!

There is no question about the traumatic year we have just come through, but come through we did. Donna Markham at our Assembly recently in Chicago marked out the decades from the 60's, 70's, 80's to today. She noted what was going on in the world, the Church, the nation, in our Congregation in each of those decades. Listening to the Spirit together, how did we respond to those times?

The exercise reminded me that we are standing on the shoulders of deceased women of great faith and trust in God to meet the needs of God's People at a particular time. God chose to need them in their time; God has chosen to need us at this time. Elizabeth Johnson says that "we should not be surprised to find divine creativity hovering very close to turbulence."

And turbulence we may well find as our nation tries to pull ahead with all the division, distrust, pain, fear, anger, frustration, and injustice that have surfaced. There are tough times ahead, but Dominicans have been there before; yes, Adrian Dominicans have been there before.

I can imagine Mother Gerald saying what one writer said recently: "You are made for these times. Ours is a time of almost daily astonishment and righteous rage over the latest degradations of what matters most to civilized, visionary people. Yet, I urge you to please not spend your spirit bewailing these difficult times. Especially do not lose hope. The fact is we were made for these times." Can't you just hear our faith-filled Mother Gerald speaking?

"I consecrate myself for them," said Jesus that night, "so that they also may be consecrated in truth: The truth that "God's dwelling is with the human race. God will dwell with them and they will be God's people, and the God-self will always be with them as their God."

And to our deceased Dominican Sisters and Brothers who believed this and trusted this in their tough times, we pray: Eternal rest grant onto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.