

## “WE CHANGE INTO WHAT WE BEHOLD”

Nearly a week ago we celebrated the Feast of All Saints. Some claim the month of November to be the month of All Souls, those who have died and still await the fullness of life with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However I prefer to call November the month of all the saints. Those whom we claim to be already in possession of The heaven we still hope for.

In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy from Vatican II we read, “By celebrating the passage of these saints from earth to heaven the Church proclaims the paschal mystery as achieved in the saints who have suffered and been glorified with Christ; she proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she pleads for God’s favors.” [Vat. II, Const. on the Sacred Liturgy: Capt. 5, Art. 104]

Let’s look at the statement: She [the church] proposes them to **the faithful as examples...**” in the light of the title of this conference, “**We change into what we behold.**” This seems a rather radical statement or an exaggeration for how can we change into what we behold? Certainly if we are beholding or looking at a flower we are not going to change into a flower, nor are we going to change into a cow if we are beholding a cow. But obviously that is not the meaning of this statement which I came across while reading from the book: The Fear of the Lord. The author was trying to show that as we come to know and understand who God really is for us then we will be changed. This is what happened to the saints as they lived and worked and prayed they were filled with the utter fullness of God and because of this their lives were transformed.

You may have heard parents or teachers telling you to read good books, watch good movies, don’t go to this or that place or they would be concerned about the friends you ran around with. When studying a craft or a trade we were given mentors or instructors who would teach us and show us the things we needed to know in order to become a seamstress, a cateress, a teacher, a nurse and so on. And you know as we watched we learned and as we learned we were able to do what the instructor was teaching us. We became what we beheld. Sometimes by observing some students you can tell who their teacher was because they are doing just like the teacher.

We are told we need mentors, people who will show us by example, who will set a pattern for us by which we can model our lives. St. Benedict in Chapter 73 tells us “to learn from the holy Fathers, the observance of which will lead to the very heights of perfection.” Jesus himself invites us to learn from Him for He is meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls. Matt. 11: 28 St. Paul in the letter to the Philippians (3:17ff) writes “Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.”

There are more than enough cases where young men and women have “gotten into the wrong” crowd and have ended up in all kinds of trouble from drugs and alcohol to petty crimes and moving on to greater crimes and greater troubles. The list could go on and on and you could probably give examples enough of your own. But what we are called to do is to fill our mind with every- thing that is good. As St. Paul writes to the Romans, “Do not model your behaviour on the contemporary world, but let the renewing of your minds transform you, so that you may discern for yourselves what is the will of God -- what is good and acceptable and mature. **Rm 12:2**

So for those who want to live a wholesome life they are cautioned and advised to avoid demoralizing movies, books, friends, places, T.V., complaining and all things that lead away from a profound respect and love of God. “For where your treasure is your heart will be also.” Mt. 6:21 For where your heart is into that you will be changed.

Reflection questions:

1. Can I name a person or more who has been a mentor to me? In what way?
2. Having lived my religious calling for some years now how am I a mentor or example to others?
3. What are some things that pull me away from this transformation that I am called to?
4. Where is my heart?