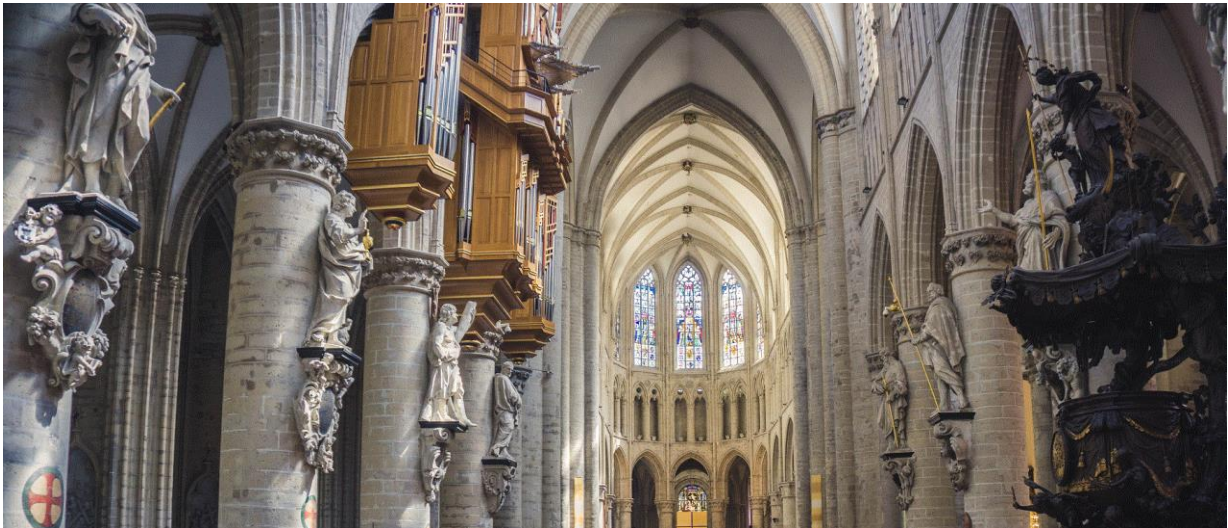




SIEBENQUELL

Saints - near and far



SOURCE: YEO KHEE ©UNSPASH

»She was a quiet saint!« - This sentence of our grandmother's about her own mother rings in my ears until today, with all the love and admiration that were echoed in her voice. (And it came from her cosmopolitan cousin who loved to visit her aunt in the country.) We all knew the story of this woman from the era of the Emperor. She had raised seven children. For years, Sunday after Sunday, she had written a letter to each of her soldier sons at the front... selfless in her devotion, modest at the side of her husband, very devout - that is how she was described. There were stories that were told with a twinkle in the eye: she observed Lent so strenuously, that by Easter there were hollows behind her ears; she went to confession every Saturday; she could rebuke herself, »Quiet, I do not want think something evil!« Yet, there was repeatedly also talk of her fidelity, of starting each day with Mass, her perseverance, her »praying her sons home« from the war. Her life was interwoven with faith in the presence of God, and this - not the narrowness and time conditioned fears - was what her daughter carried on throughout her own life

Today is All Saints, a solemnity that has grown ever more distant, as distant as we have moved the saints from us. Wilhelm Bruners expresses it like this:

The Saints

Astronomically far

have we distanced ourselves from them:
into heaven or onto cloth banners
Some must stand an eternity
on podium or altars –
Reward for a more or less
moral life,

When we have lost keys,
we promise them candles
or a larger sum of money
and are disappointed
when they do not react immediately

We treat them like house slaves
for the alleviation of our lives
(After all, they can work miracles
if they wanted to. They proved
it often enough.

They show us forbearance
because our wishes were also theirs.
The most human among them
recommend short prayers, warm baths
and deep sleep. They understand
our stutterings and send
a few suns:

The best medicine against melancholy.

(From »Niemandsländ. Gott« 2015)

It was never melancholic when there was talk of our »quiet saint« in the family. These were joyous and lively hours in which our great grandmother was very near. She now grows ever closer to me, reminding me we are all good and called to be holy: »Be holy, as I am holy!« (1 Pet. 1, 16) And not least of all, these memories widen my view and my heart toward the great communion and community of those who live in this world and in the other world, for all the saints.

Rosemarie Monnerjahn
Vallendar, November 1st, 2018