As we celebrate All Saint’s Sunday we have before us a list of virtues to which we are called as saints of God, and a list of less honorable items which we are to avoid.

In general these Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Plain talk about the importance of sharing with those in need without regard for whether or not you will be repaid in this lifetime. The Beatitudes preach to the elite the importance of an open sharing based on generosity or need similar to how families shared with each other in agrarian societies. This is a sharing in which return is postponed or forgotten. The Beatitudes describe the lifestyle of saints as one in which we live generously. They describe the lifestyle of saints as one in which we give to others without expecting anything in return and, by extension, relate to others with a generous spirit.

Since all of us – the baptized—are saints and are continually being formed in sainthood, I’d like us to reflect a bit on what living generously looks like for our lives. Lives are pretty long and circuitous so I’d like to start by reflecting on what living generously might look like this afternoon.

Many of us are sports fans – and especially Bills fans. When our quarterback makes a mistake, we’re often inclined to yell just a bit, perhaps, some unkind things. “You stupid quarterback, where did you learn to throw like that,” for example. But what would happen if we weren’t so quick to yell at the quarterback through our TVs? What if we generously thought that our quarterback was doing the best he could and that our job as saints was to pray for him and support him.

Perhaps this seems a silly example, since the quarterback can’t really hear us yelling at him or praying for him through the TV. But what we yell or don’t yell at our quarterback is does affect us and our attitudes toward others. When we become too judgmental of our sports heros, we have the tendency to become too judgmental of our neighbors. When we fail to tolerate even one mistake from our quarterback because it might cause “our team” to lose, we are also likely to fail to tolerate a mistake from a friend because it hurts our feelings. Learning to cut the quarterback some slack may help us learn to give those in our daily lives some slack, as well.

Let’s take another example of how we might live generously today. What if we found a new person at coffee hour, perhaps someone we don’t know very well, and really sat and listened to that person describe his or herr life and challenges? What if we then we went home and prayed for tha person?

Perhaps we extend this caring of our church family to someone who isn’t here today. Perhaps we give that person a call to see what they need and strive to meet that need. We can extend this experience into our daily lives this week by seeking out those in the community who have needs, and then giving generously of our time, presence and other resources to listen to them and help them.

Another way we could live generously today is to buy lunch for someone else. Perhaps it is someone who is already a friend but could use the help or who would just be flattered by the help. Or perhaps it is a random stranger. But buying lunch for someone is one way to live generously today.

We can live generously today by putting something in the blessing box for those in Niagara Falls who need it, or by contributing to the adopted families program.

Every day we live generously makes it easier to live generously the next day. The more we live generously the more we are formed as saints.

Lena Warren, a Lutheran pastor, writes this in her blog Jabbok Dawn.[[1]](#endnote-1)

“To find God, to find saint-hood we are not called to withdraw from the suffering of the world.  We are not called to be stained-glass, dust-free holy people.  No, we are called to seek the blessing of God by entering into the broken suffering of the world—to stand with our neighbor in poverty; to hold our community in suffering; to liberate our world from hunger; and to love even those we find unloveable.  That is what sainthood is—to touch the reality of every day life and find God there.”

Be blessed as a saint of God. Live generously every day.

1. <https://jabbokdawn.com/2013/11/02/blessed-is-the-dust/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)