

In Praise of Saints

Stuart Devenish

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Saints' bodies are weak and sometimes broken,
still, their bending and bowing are indices of grace,
as they make room for the Holy Spirit in their human spirits.

All pensive and poised, they perform heaven
on earth long before trumpets announce,
the coming of a new day to a stagnant age.

Saints' faces are often anguished by tears,
but are also frequently lit by a shining exuberance;
as the *real presence* of something exquisite,
projects itself outwards through their eyes.

Their faces canvases of exemplary goodness
they personify the unhurried embrace of God.

Saints' hands are serving hands,
wrinkled by humanity and scored by time.
Through busying themselves with the care of others,
giving a loaf of hope, and a cup of grace;

eternity writ large in the small features
of their hands which—some say—are God's hands.

Saints' lives are notable by the fact
that they are directed intently towards
performing the values of another world
where love, mercy and righteousness change hands
as the currency which is asked and given
from charitable hearts, debtors no more.

So we honor the saints
whose lives, bodies, faces and hands hallow the world
benedictions of self forgetfulness
as they give away their lives, unmindful of their rank
descending the *via delorosa* road
that makes the righteous blessed—happy saints!

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