

spouse?” It’s fun to hear those stories! But the most striking thing for me is that they met in the first place. Two individuals, growing up in different families, places, and circumstances, probably unaware of each other’s existence. Then came that magical day when, in the plan of God, their paths crossed and a new branch of the family tree was started.

Now think back through all the generations of the known and unknown members of your family. Every single marriage (or liaison!!) has paved the way for our existence here and now. One missing link and chances are good that you and I would not be here. There’s a lot of truth to Proverbs 8:28: “I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.”

Furthermore, each individual and family unit in your tree had friends, neighbors, teachers, service suppliers, and so on. And so do you. Can you fathom just how many hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of past and present people have played a direct or indirect role in helping you be the person you are now?

November: it’s a good time to remember and give thanks for all those who have helped us to become who we are... including Jesus and His Father, our Creator. Our existence in November of 2019 is a miraculous work of God!

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MONTHLY REFLECTION SERIES

Remembering Our Ancestors

by Rev. Herb Yost, C.S.C.



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In the Catholic faith tradition, November is a time to remember in a special way all those who have gone before us. On the civil side, November is also National Plan a Family Reunion Month. The two ideas really go together!

Up until a few years ago, my list of family members to remember was limited to those I had known: two grandparents, an aunt and an uncle (we were a small family!). Add to that a stillborn child of my niece named Orion. I would also make time to remember those who were influential in my life: teachers, mentors, friends, and fellow members of Holy Cross.

Now the older members of my family are going home to the Lord: Dad (2015), Mom (March 2019) and my Uncle Pat (October 2019). Four classmates from the minor seminary have also died in the last three years (there were 16 of us who graduated and we have been very close to each other). My Aunt Sis is now the oldest member of the family, and I am the oldest male.

Add to these all the residents of St. Paul's that I have come to know and love over the eight years I've been here. They've touched my life in so many ways, as have you!

And, there's more! Shortly before Dad died, I started working on our family tree using the Ancestry website. Now that was a trip following those green leaves! Dad's side of the family dead-ended in

Germany in the 1400's. They served a feudal lord who allowed them to farm a small plot in return for military service. Now get this: Mom's side of the family could be traced back to pre-Roman times!!! There were simple folks, some canonized saints and royalty, and plenty of unsavory characters (for example, Alaric, who sacked Rome in 410). When



I was in Rome in 2001, I picked up a brick fragment from a waste pile near the Coliseum as a souvenir. Come to find out, Mom had an ancestor named Tullus Domitius Calvisius, who was part owner of a nearby brickyard that made the bricks for the Coliseum and the Pantheon. Now what are the odds?!!!

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Proverbs 8:28

So instead of just a handful of relatives to remember and pray for, now the Yost-Hiemenz family numbers 12,000+ named individuals. What a difference that has made in my November prayer! And what a blast it must be in the family reunions as each new member arrives in heaven! It's a good thing we all have an eternity to get to know our respective families!

There's one other thing for your reflection. I always enjoy asking engaged couples: "How did you meet?" The same thing with new members of the St. Paul's community: "How did you meet your