



From Deacon Mark Miller's Desk

Pope Francis' intention for November is: "Let us pray that people who suffer from depression or burnout will find support and a light that opens them up to life." "Overwork and work-related stress cause many people to experience extreme exhaustion — mental, emotional, affective and physical exhaustion."

"Sadness, apathy and spiritual tiredness end up dominating the lives of people, who are overloaded due to the rhythm of life today," Pope Francis noted. He went on to say, "Let us try to be close to those who are exhausted, to those who are desperate, without hope. Often, we should just simply listen in silence because we cannot go and tell someone, 'No, life's not like that. Listen to me, I'll give you the solution.' There's no solution," he said.

"And besides, let us not forget that, along with the indispensable psychological counseling, which is useful and effective, Jesus' words also help," he said, such as, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28).

He picked this intention specifically for November as it starts shorter and colder days for the Northern Hemisphere. This combination sometimes triggers "seasonal affective disorder" and depressive symptoms, according to many medical experts.

Many of the church's saints have titles added to their names. We probably have heard St. Joseph the Worker, St. Mathew the Evangelist, or St. Michael the Archangel. Perhaps one of the most unusual titles belongs to "The Holy Fiancé," Blessed Sandra Sabattini. She is the first blessed bride in church history.

Sandra was just 22 when she died after being struck by a car in 1984. She was a woman of remarkable piety and dedication who, in her short life, wished to help the people she called "the last of the last." At the time of her death, she was attending medical school in the hope of becoming a medical missionary in Africa.

Her first parish priest, who was also her uncle, fostered in her a love for Christ. When she was seven and attending a Vacation Bible School, one of the leaders remembered he would often "watch her when she entered the chapel alone, with a doll in one hand and a rosary in the other. She often carried a single-

decade rosary in her tiny hand. She knelt in the last pew and bowed her little head. She stayed there a little, then she went out and happily rejoined the group."

When she turned 12, she joined the Pope John XXIII Community, which emphasizes service to the poorest and weakest of society. She volunteered with the community throughout her high school years and beyond. When she was 17, she met Guido Rossi, a fellow member of the community. They enjoyed their first date a year later – Sandra insisted they visit a cemetery to visit the graves of people who had been forgotten. The two remained together for the next four years and had plans to marry.

In the early 80s, Italy experienced an exploding drug problem, and Sandra – then a 21-year-old medical student – with Guido at her side, volunteered to help the expanding population of drug addicts. Just two years later, Sandra, Guido, and a friend were struck by a car as they were going to attend a community meeting. Sandra died of her injuries less than a week later.

Sabattini was declared venerable by Pope Francis on March 6, 2018, and a miracle received through her intercession was confirmed in October 2019, which paved the way for her beatification. COVID delayed her Beatification Mass until last month.

Her fiancé Guido continued his service to the church and the Pope John XXIII Community. He is a Permanent Deacon and participated in her Beatification.

At an annual Mass to remember those church leaders who died in the previous year, Pope Francis asked for prayers for 17 cardinals and 174 bishops. In his homily, Pope Francis talked about spiritual viruses that we all face with "life's difficulties and problems," especially "the last and greatest" -- death. The pope, who turns 85 soon, named some of these viruses: irritability, despondency, impatience, sadness, aggressivity, excessive complaining, loss of hope in God, and, of course, bitterness. He continued, "In the face of life's difficulties and problems, it is difficult to have patience and remain calm. We become irritated, and despondency often sets in. Thus, we can be strongly tempted by pessimism and resignation, to see everything as dark, to become accustomed to mistrustful and complaining tones." The remedy to these ills, he said, is patient endurance.