

A Cheering Crowd of Witnesses



Hebrews 12:1-3

All Hallows
or
All Saints Day

November 1st

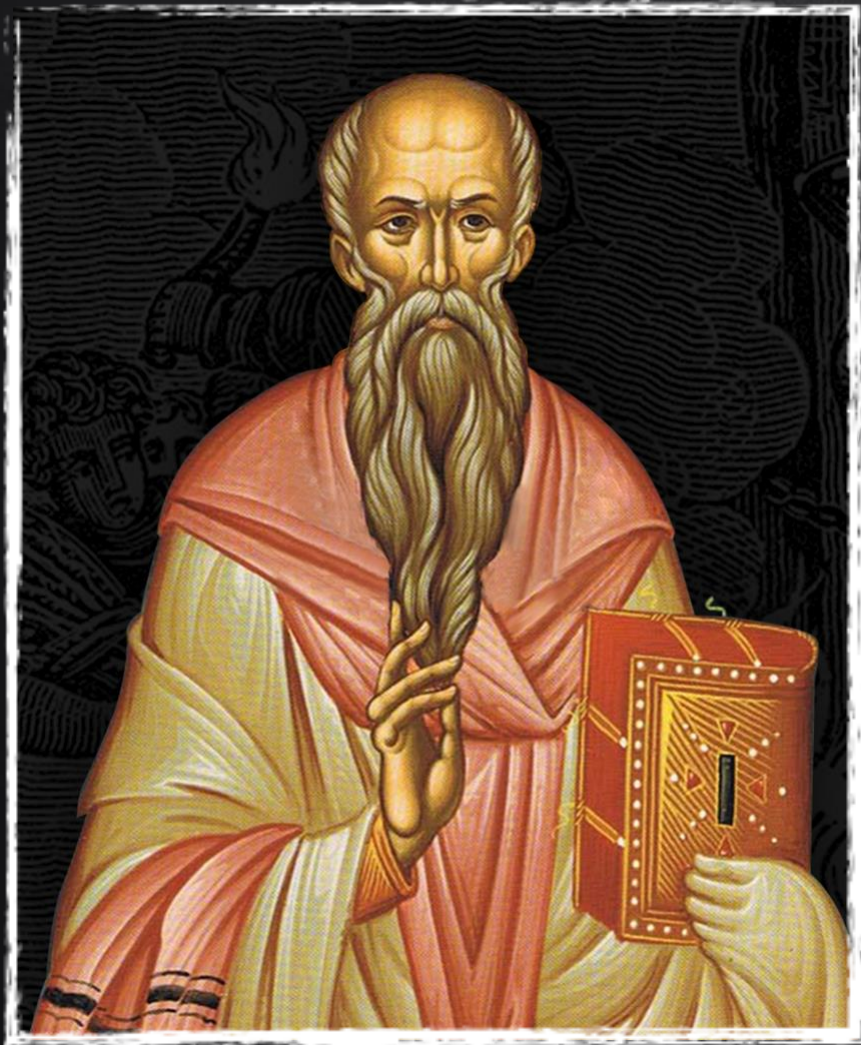


Polycarp of
Smyrna
(69-156 AD)





*“Be strong,
Polycarp, and
play the man.”*



*“I have served him
eighty-six years, and
he has done me no
wrong. How can I
blaspheme my King
who saved me? Listen
with assurance! I am a
Christian.”*

“You threaten with the fire that burns for a time and after a little while is snuffed out. You are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of the eternal punishment that is reserved for the ungodly. But why do you hesitate? Bring on whatever you want.”



Hebrews 12:1 (NTE)

1 What about us, then? We have such a great cloud of witnesses all around us! What we must do is this: we must put aside each heavy weight, and the sin which gets in the way so easily. We must run the race that lies in front of us, and we must run it patiently.

Hebrews 12:2 (NTE)

2 We must look ahead, to Jesus. He is the one who carved out the path for faith, and he's the one who brought it to completion. He knew that there was joy spread out and waiting for him. That's why he endured the cross, making light of its shame, and has now taken his seat at the right hand of God's throne.

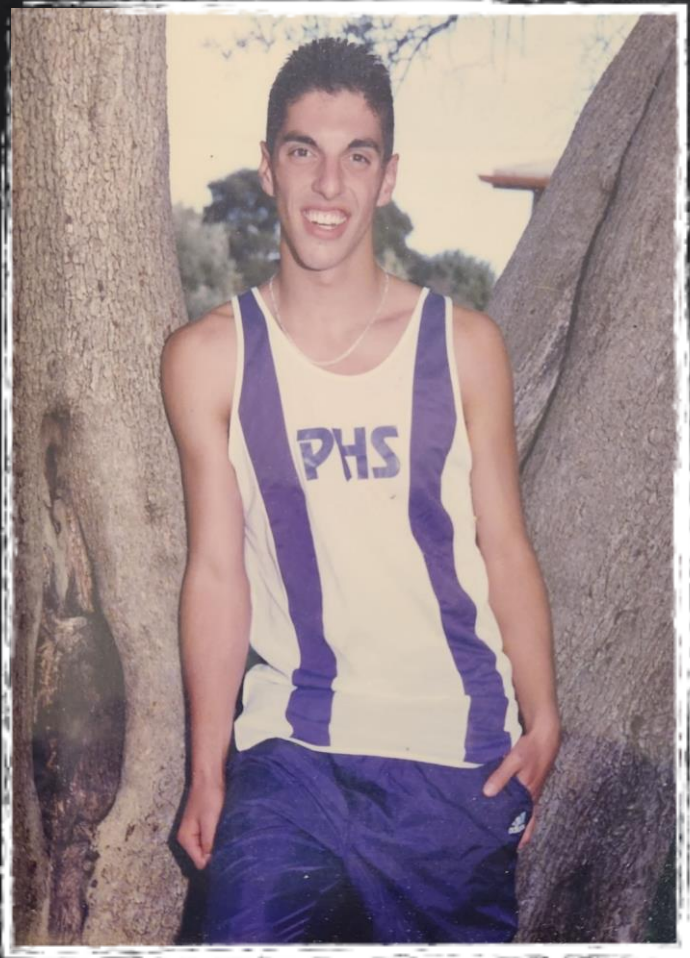
Hebrews 12:3 (NTE)

3 He put up with enormous opposition from sinners. Weigh up in your minds just how severe it was; then you won't find yourselves getting weary and worn out.

The cheering crowd of witnesses
calls us to rid ourselves of any
weight that is holding us down.

The cheering crowd of witnesses
calls us to avoid the obstacles
that threaten to injure us and take
us out of the race.

The cheering crowd of witnesses
calls us to run with patient
endurance.



Me at the
beginning of my
racing career

Me in the middle
of my racing career



When patient
endurance seems
the hardest, look
to Jesus.



An All-Saints Day Challenge

- Reflect on the lives of the faithful.
- Find among those running ahead you some dialogue partners and spiritual mentors who might spur you forward towards Jesus.

An All-Saints Day Challenge

- Join the chorus of cheering spectators.
- Encourage and invest in those racing behind you.



“Let us unceasingly cling to our hope and to the down payment on our righteousness, who is Christ Jesus. He is the one ‘who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, who did no sin, nor was any guile found in his mouth.’ But he endured all things that we might live in him. Let us become imitators of his endurance. If we suffer on behalf of his name, we should give him glory. Through his own example, he gave us a model and we ourselves have put our trust in this. So, I appeal to you to obey the word of righteousness and to endure with all endurance.” (*Polycarp*)