

Homily of the Feast of All Saints, 2020

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; Psalm 24:16, 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12

Amen, amen, blessings and glory, wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor,

Power and might, belong to our God, forever and ever, amen.

(Worship exclamation of all the angels who stood around the throne of God in St. John's vision in the first reading, Revelation 7:12.)

The Catholic Church holds and teaches that the Church exists simultaneously in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory. The Church in heaven is called Church Triumphant, the Church on earth is called Church Militant, and the Church in purgatory is called Church Suffering. The unity of the Church in heaven and the Church on earth is called Communion of Saints. It is based on this unity that we are celebrating today, the Feast of All Saints. This communion continues tomorrow, November 2, when we will commemorate All Souls, the Church Suffering, in a special way.

In our celebration today, we pray that the saints in heaven intercede for us. They were close to God while they lived on earth. Now, they are with God in heaven; they intercede for us. That is why Catholics pray in the intercession of the saints.

In the first reading, St. John saw "a vision of heaven, and of a great multitude, which no one can count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue." Only a few saints out of the multitude of saints in heaven are canonized and celebrated. Today, we celebrate all the saints. Indeed, our loved ones who have gone before us and our ancestors are included. Therefore, it is not out of place to invoke our departed loved ones and our ancestors to intercede for us.

The Catholic Church teaches that we take or include saints' names for Baptism and Confirmation, so that those saints we take as our patron saints intercede for us, and we strive to imitate the life they lived. The priest who baptizes or the bishop who confirms cannot stop anyone from choosing names of celebrities for Baptism or Confirmation. But, it is more spiritually beneficial to choose saints names for the sacraments.

The Church Militant is a pilgrim church. Our destination is Church Triumphant. Therefore, while on earth, we need to live lives that will enable us to join the Church Triumphant in heaven. The second reading says, "Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure."

Jesus gives us the beatitude in the Gospel that can guide us in our effort here on earth to join the Church Triumphant. How triumphant would our world be if we, ourselves, our leaders and our rulers be guided by the beatitudes?

An explanation of the meaning of the beatitudes:

- To be poor in spirit means to be lowly, to be self-contained, and not greedy.
- To mourn means to grieve over sin and evil and to make effort to stop them.
- To be meek means to be gentle, not antagonistic, and able to live and work with others.
- To hunger and thirst for righteousness means to stand up for justice or fight for justice.
- To be merciful means to be involved in all kinds of works of mercy and charity.
- To be clean of heart means to be without guile and corrupt practices.
- To be peacemakers means to be instruments of peace.
- To be persecuted for the sake of righteousness means to put one's life on the line in order to fight against injustice.

St. Theresa of Lisieux advises that becoming a saint, or going to heaven is not only achieved by doing extraordinary and mighty deeds. She advises us not to aim at going to heaven by doing great things, but by doing small things with great love. She calls this the simple way, a simple and direct path to heaven.

Also, Miriam C. Hunter writes, "Why were the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful; patient when it was difficult to be patient. And because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still; and kept silent when they wanted to talk. And because they were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable..." With human being, it is difficult, but, with God all things are possible.

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