

From Fr Alimaji's Desk

REFLECTIONS ON ALL SAINTS

This year 2020 November 1 is also the 31st Sunday in Ordinary time. Our today's Bible Readings are: Rev. 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Mt. 5:1-12a; and our song of praise is Ps 24. Today is a holy day of obligation, a solemnity dedicated to the saints in glory. **We are celebrating our faith that the saints lived holy lives on earth and are glorified by granting them eternal happiness with Christ Jesus in heaven.** Therefore, the solemnity of All Saints is a celebration the Catholic Church beautifully placed before our gaze in her wisdom and knowledge, to give us solace and fulfillment for all our prayers and sacrifices, and true consolation for all our labors, and trials, and the persecutions some of us are undergoing because of our Christians faith. This gives us the hope to keep doing good here on earth, knowing that the grace of God working in us to do what is right, would lead us to eternal salvation in Christ. With faith and hope we act in charity with one another and the world around us. These are the three spiritual gifts that would last (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). I conclude that the person who wishes to live holy here on earth must necessarily put on these three as breastplates.

Drawing from my previous reflections on this theme, we are reflecting on the end-times, the time of rapture, when the Lord comes to select his faithful. The next three weeks our readings would be about the Day of Judgment, the Day of the Lord (2 Th. 2:2), the Day of Salvation (Lk. 19: 9). In our First Reading for this feast this year, John tells us of his vision, that the angel of God has placed the seal of salvation on the foreheads of those earmarked for heaven (Rev. 7:3). What is that seal? Is it the "Sign of the Cross"? Secondly, they are a great multitude from every corner of the earth, together with the remnants of the '12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of the Lamb' in the millennium in question (1,000 years of the "reign of Christ"), giving us the 144,000 included in the reign of Christ, (cf. Rev. 20:1-6, 7-10, 11-15). Those that have attended my Seminar on the Book of Revelation would easily remember these **symbolic statements and numbers, and that they are not to be taken literally**. Last year I said that on this feast we may have to come to Mass dressed in white. **Just a symbolic gesture of purity and cleanliness expressed in white dress!** It signifies the purity of the people that long to see the face of God, turning their robes white in the blood, (cf. Ps. 24:6; Rev. 7:14; Mt. 5:8). What a white blood! Ever seen white blood before? The Blood of the Lamb makes our robes white as snow. This is an imagery we must try to understand and decipher its meaning, for blood cannot make anything white. The good news is this is what the Blood of Jesus has done for us for our redemption the divine blood shed as an expiation for our sins. Only the divine blood can achieve this feat for the salvation of all humankind from all the corners of the earth. God's love is upon us because he has adopted us as his children in Christ, called to make ourselves pure for him (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1-3).

Let me repeat what I said last year: "We are the saints-in-the-making, while we struggle here on earth. We look forward to joining the heavenly hosts. Therefore, our hearts would remain restless, until they rest in God." Let us strive to live right here on earth, so that our passing from this life would be regarded a celebration of a life well-spent, worthy to experience no further torment having received chastisement on earth from people (cf. Wis. 3:1-9; Mt. 5:11-12). Our theory of Purgatory still holds. Not all sins are chargeable to eternal death, according to 1 John 5:16-17. For this reason we offer Masses

and pray for our departed friends, and give stipends in faith (cf. 2 Mac. 12:42-46). November is dedicated to praying for their final resurrection.

The Eight Beatitudes are given to us by Christ as guides we must follow in this life, to bring us to the gate of heaven, (cf. Mt. 5:1-12a). They are modules for saintly living. Every wise and prudent person must model his or her life by adhering to the teachings of Christ. The beatitudes are the Lord's proclamations of the kingdom virtues, given to us as steps we must trace or climb to walk into the kingdom of heaven. They should illuminate the eyes of our minds and consciences. Saint Pope John Paul II called it "The 3rd Luminous Mystery". The Church simply beatifies and finally canonizes men and women in every age and from peoples and nations who became models of good Christian living during their lives on earth. They are just a few to encourage us. **They lived their lives as symbols of faith, of goodness, of righteousness, of holiness, of love of neighbor, peacemakers, showing meekness, truth, justice, poor in spirit, and the like. They cooperated with the Holy Spirit and exhibited the fruits of the spiritual virtues, (cf. Galatians 5: 22-26). In the end, God comforts the saints with eternal life in his Kingdom of love and peace.** Let us keep doing our best for sainthood! Oh, when the saints, go marching in; Oh, I want to be in their number, when the saints go marching in!