

John saw an angel come up from the East and he cried out in a loud voice “do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God” (Rev 7:3).

With each infant baptism, we mark the forehead of the child to be baptized. And the priest or deacon explains: “Dear children, the Church of God receives you with great joy. In her name I sign you with the Sign of the Cross of Christ our Savior; then, after me, your parents and godparents will do the same.” This outward sign foreshadows the work of the Holy Spirit at the time of baptism later in the liturgy.

As water is poured over the forehead, we baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. “Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated” (CCC 1272).

Like Baptism, Confirmation strengthens us in our faith and it too “imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark.” Outwardly, the Bishop anoints on the forehead with sacred chrism oil. Inwardly, “Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he or she may be his witness” (CCC 1304).

We are sealed by “the Holy Spirit with the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of his glory” (Eph 1:13-14). God calls every human into being. God calls everyone to sainthood. The final installment comes due upon the end of our lives. “Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me’” (Mt 25:34-36).

Throughout the year, our church calendar recognizes the canonized saints, those in the hall of fame. But the saints in heaven are more numerous than the stars. In the Book of Revelation, John explains “I had a vision of **a great multitude, which no one could count**, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb” (7:9). “On this solemnity of All Saints, we recall the holy men and women who, having completed their earthly journeys, now live forever with God. These saints, though not canonized, offer us models of abiding faith and love of God and neighbor” (Essential Guide to Seasons and Saints, 109).

On All Saints Day, we honor God for all the holy men and women he has called from this life to share the joys of eternity. And we are reminded of our own call to holiness. Through the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us on how we are to live life to the fullest that we may one day be counted among the great multitude of saints. It is not enough to simply receive the indelible mark on the soul through Baptism and later in Confirmation. Jesus calls us to put our faith into action.

The hymn by Dan Schutte, *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam*, translates the Beatitudes into a beautiful prayer to ask God to help us become saints:

God of all things, in great and small things, so we labor to set all hearts on fire, for your greater glory, O God.<sup>i</sup>

Be the passion in our soul as we fight for justice and long for the reign of peace

Be the hunger in our heart as we bring your mercy to all who are bound by shame

Be the wonder in our mind as we seek for wisdom and walk in the way of truth

Be the blessing on our lips as we share your promise of hope for the homeless heart

In a world bitterly divided, God is counting on us to be saints to help others know of God’s love for all of humanity. “See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God” (1 Jn 3:1).

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<sup>i</sup> Lyrics to *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* by Dan Schutte