

## Solemnity of All Saints – 2020

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

“I am no saint.” I am sure that most of us have heard someone say and, even ourselves utter that line. “I am no saint.” Often, we hear this said or say it as an excuse for wrong behavior. “I am no saint.” Maybe it’s because we don’t feel our faith is strong enough or maybe it’s because we aren’t worthy enough.

Today is All Saints Day. It’s a celebration of joy dedicated to those who have died and now live with God in heaven. This day we acknowledge our men and women who have lived lives of Christian virtue as they strove to follow the Lord Jesus as best they could in their own little corner of the world.

This is the time when we give thanks to our God for them -- for their witness, their example, their faith-filled efforts on behalf of a world in desperate need of love, mercy, compassion and generosity.

Our world is in turmoil and in much pain. Many are struggling due to the COVID-19 and looking for a sign of hope, “a light at the end of the tunnel.” And so we ask the saints for their prayers, we ask them to unite their prayers with ours -- as a family of faith united in love and in communion with one another. You see, the impact the Saints have had on the Church and the world is immeasurable. And for that, we are truly grateful.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

When we think of the saints, often we think of people well known for their holiness and popularity like Peter and Paul, and the Twelve, like John the Baptist and the prophets of old.

Or, we may think of people like Father Damien, Mother Marianne, Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II. In other words, we think of those people whom the church has declared to be saints by verified miracles and official decree.

It is true that those who are canonized are saints. They led lives of holiness and accomplished great deeds in ways none of us could ever imagine. But - when we get down to it Saints were not perfect. Not even close.

They didn’t always get things right. They had faults and failings, weaknesses and prejudices. And yes, they sinned. Not once in a blue moon, but in ways similar to you and me. Read their biographies and you will know what I mean.

Some were probably judgmental. Some probably had short tempers, or were crabby and cranky from time to time, or had biases against certain persons or groups.

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Others might have been arrogant, or petty, or held grudges. Many, most certainly had to wrestle with the physical passions of life. And yet, that did not stop them from striving to do whatever they could to listen to God's voice in their heart and follow it -- wherever and however it took them, allowing God to help them to their feet, dust them off, and begin down the path of faith once again.

Dear friends, this is the day for each of us to pledge to do something -- whether that something is large or small for our God and our fellow human beings, and embrace blessedness to which we are called.

Like the canonized saints, not unlike you and me, who were able to say "yes" a little more often, "love" a little more deeply, and "give" without counting the cost, we should never let our inadequacy and brokenness dissuade us from being our best in loving every person a little more and doing good in every situation.

You see, saintliness does not consist in doing great, big things. To quote St. Therese, the "Little Flower", it consists "in doing little things with greater love." Who knows what might be possible? Who knows what acts of love and self-giving might pour forth from us -- not despite us, but through us -- through the love of our incredible God who believes in us more than we believe in ourselves.

Listen again to the One who loves us unconditionally, believes in us profoundly and wants us unquestionably to be with Him for all eternity as St. John tells us in the Second Reading.

**“Beloved, we are God’s children now;  
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.  
We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,  
for we shall see him as he is.”**

So this day we praise our God for his love, and his confidence in us regardless of our faults and shortcomings. We give thanks to God for the men and women who have gone before us and who have encouraged us on the path of faith and provided us a picture of what it means to live out this thing we call "holiness", what it means to be saints. And we also ask for their prayers, that we might in similar ways do what they did -- live authentic lives -- lives of greater love, greater mercy, greater generosity.

It's time to begin the remaining days of our lives. Worried? Don't be. "Blessed are you ..." Jesus tells us in the Beatitudes. Blessed indeed are we this day and the endless joy with God forever. Amen.