

## **Solemnity of All Saints**

### **We Become Saints by the Love and Grace of God**

Every first day of November near the end of the liturgical year, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of All Saints- All Hallows. The Church throughout the year on different days celebrates the feasts of the canonized saints, but today's feast includes both the canonized and other people in heaven. The first reading today gives a good background and foundation to today's feast. The reading combines two visions of John. First is the vision of 144,000 or 12 squared, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. Second is the vision of a great multitude, which no one could count from every nation, race, people, and tongue. These saints in heaven cried out: "Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the lamb." This shows that God has given us the gift of salvation through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, as John describes him (John 1: 27) and we use the same in our Mass.

Salvation is the gift God has given us to accept. It is His infinite and definite love He has shown to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Through this love as St. John describes in the second reading, we are all made children of God and we were all clothed with the white garment in our baptism. It is by our sincere effort to keep on wearing these white garments that we win the salvation He has given us, which is by our perseverance and steadfastness (Luke 21: 19) in God's love and mercy.

The life of blessedness which is the life towards salvation is what Jesus invites us in the Beatitudes as part of His Sermon on Mount in the Gospel today. The eight or nine Beatitudes depending on how one calculates them are ways through which Jesus is inviting us to continue to wear the white garments He has given us. The Beatitudes are connected. You cannot live one while avoiding the other. Under them are the virtues of humility, patience, love, and perseverance. Through the life of Beatitudes God calls us into the way of salvation. We continue to renew our acceptance of the gift of salvation by the efforts we make to keep our white robes clean. We also ask ourselves: What is that in my life that is staining my white robe? Any life that is against the life of blessedness certainly will stain our white robes.

As we celebrate this great feast through which God calls us to saintly life and which reminds us of the teaching of the Church on the Communion of the Saints, which we profess in our creed. "I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, and the Communion of the Saints..." It means that the Church in this world-the Pilgrim Church, the Church in Purgatory- the Suffering Church and the Church in Heaven- the Triumphant Church are one in Christ. It reminds us of our faith in the intercession of the saints and calls us to imitate their exemplary lives. The saints lived and continue to live among us. They are the good people we have known and admired so much. When they leave us, they pray for us, but we are called to take after the good examples they have left behind so that we become saints to others and be able to enjoy everlastingly the life of blessedness, which God has given us freely. Amen.