

Homily for All Saints Day

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven"

Today the Church celebrates the solemnity of all known and unknown Saints of Heaven. They are all the holy people who have gone before us and they now share in the perfect happiness of heaven. Some of us may question who are Saints that we honor today? These saints are men and women just like us when they were alive, only now they are in heaven since they were already holy on earth. We just heard an answer to this question in the first reading from the Book of Revelation gives us a vision of the great multitude of the saints in heaven. They are gathered around the Lamb. It is a gathering of people from every land and nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues. These people were wearing in white robes and holding the palm branches. They were standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They are there to give glory to God forever since they have lived lives which gave witness to God.

In the first Letter of John also gives us another answer to that question. He addresses Christians who are experiencing struggles, and he reminds them about the present and the future. In the present, he tells them, "We are God's children now." Even while we struggle, this is true. If God is our Father, then we are God's children. Regarding the future, he says, "What we shall be has not yet been revealed." Better things are yet to come. There is no need to get discouraged. We may not see the results in this life, but we will experience them in the next. This is the hope that the Church extends to us on All Saints Day.

In the gospel reading, Jesus taught about the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus describes how blessed will be those who live lives which reflect their relationship with God and others. With bounty of God who bestowed them the eternal happiness on the faithful followers of Jesus since all of them live according to the teaching of Jesus and persevere in faith. All of them loved God above all things.

Why do we often to pray to the Saints? Why do we not pray directly to God? Why do we often to pray to the Saints like St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Michael, St. Therese, St. Peter and other Saints. We pray to the Saints because they can help us on the journey to Jesus. Like in your family, some children who want to ask for something but they are afraid of asking to their mother or father. So they may ask mother/father for help in asking their father/mother to allow or agree what their children ask for. So all the Saints are now gathered around the throne of God and they can intercede for us and help us. And we know that the Saints do intercede for us and help us because so many people claim to have received favors through praying to a particular Saint. So praying to the Saints is powerful. They are our brothers

and sisters from every country and from every generation and they can help us on our path to God.

On this Solemnity of all Saints, the Church calls us to open our eyes of faith to see all the Saints who already stand in the presence of God who behold him face to face. These holy men and women are looking down on us with love and pray for us and cheering us on. Through their prayers we may join with them one day in heaven by sharing in God's victory as they have. It won't be very long for us before we join them in the perfect happiness of heaven. This sure hope of heavenly happiness is waiting for us. This is our hope and faith. Remember when we are faithful in times of trouble, we need not be discouraged, but be courage. One day God will welcome us into the company of saints. And we will join them in heaven.

Brothers and Sisters, by honoring the saints, we are reminded that our true home in heaven with God and we too can become Saints. We thank God for all the Saints who pray for us and help us every day. We praise and glorify God for preparing us a place with them where we can worship Him for all eternity. Amen!