

REFLECTION FOR SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

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

Why is it necessary to celebrate the feast of all saints? There are a handful of saints whose feast days we celebrate on specific days in the year but there are countless unknown and uncanonized saints who have no feast days. Some of them are our children, parents, grandparents, family members, and friends.

The celebration of All Saints is “our” celebration: not because we are good, but because the sanctity of God has touched our life.

Today we thank God for giving ordinary men and women a share in His holiness and Heavenly glory as a reward for their Faith.

This feast is observed to teach us to honour the saints, both by imitating their lives and by seeking their intercession for us before Christ.

People often come up to me and ask, “Father, who is your favourite saint?”

Sometimes I tell them that it’s **St Augustine**. He really knew how to sin when he was young, and he really knew how to love God when he was older.

Or I say that I love **St Monica**. She was Augustine’s *mother*. She loved her son, and she never gave up on him, even though he broke her heart. Lots of modern moms know what that’s like.

I love Saint Francis for his simplicity. I love **St Mother Teresa** for her service to the poor. I love **Saint Nicholas** for his generosity.

I love St Therese of the Child Jesus for her simple and practical spirituality. It is a spirituality which shows us that we do not have to do extraordinary things in order to be disciples of Jesus but witness to gospel values simply in our everyday circumstances.

The saints we celebrate were men and women like us. Looking at them, we see what we could be. In them, we see human beings at their brightest and best. The saints are examples, teachers, friends, advocates; they serve as models for us precisely because they were sinners like us. Where we are now, they used to be, and where they are now, we hope to be someday.

The saints remind us today that God’s call for holiness is universal. We grow in holiness when we live wholesome lives of integrity truth, justice, charity, mercy, and compassion, sharing our blessings with others.

Too often, we give ourselves an excuse NOT to be saints. We tell ourselves that, to be a saint, we have to do something dramatic, unusual, and spectacular.

Sainthood is not something reserved for a select few, but is the calling given to all, we can all become saints. We need to accept the challenge to become saints.

You can become a saint for being a good teacher, good nurse, good doctor, good cook, good catechist, cleaner, good parents, good grandparents, faithful wife, faithful husband, by being true and faithful to your vocation.

One thing that strikes you first when one reads the life of the saints – is their diversity. It would be very difficult to find one pattern of holiness, one way of following Christ.

Whatever our path in life, what really matters is that we should be ourselves, our unique selves – Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.

Do not refuse life, or try to be someone else, but to grow from the seed of life within each of us.

The saints didn't become saints by putting on a false or artificial self. The saints inspire us to try to win back our finer, kinder and healthier selves.

Piety is no substitute for goodness. Perhaps there can be goodness without holiness. But there is no holiness without goodness. Since we are made in God's image, all of us have the capacity for goodness. The saints show us how to express this goodness.

When we experience weariness and a sense of failure, the saints are saying to us-We are with you, don't give up.

Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.

May the Holy Mother of God, Queen of the saints, help us to firmly walk the path of sainthood and live lives that are worthy of our Christian dignity.

Fr Patrick