

November 1, All Saints Day

All baptized Christians who have died and are now with God in glory are considered saints. All Saints Day is intended to honor the memory of countless unknown and uncanonized saints who have no feast days. 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 honor the saints, both by imitating their lives and by seeking their intercession for us before Christ, the only mediator between God and man (1 Tm 2:5). The Church reminds us today that God's call for holiness is universal, that all of us are called to live in His love and to make His love real in the lives of those around us. Holiness is related to the word wholesomeness. We grow in holiness when we live wholesome lives of integrity truth, justice, charity, mercy, and compassion, sharing our blessings with others.

The feast gives us an occasion to thank God for having invited so many of our ancestors to join the company of the saints. May our reflection on the heroic lives of the saints and the imitation of their lifestyle enable us to hear from our Lord the words of grand welcome to eternal bliss: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joys of your master" (Mt 25:21). Today is also a day for us to pray to the saints, both the canonized and the uncanonized, asking them to pray on our behalf that we may live our lives in faithfulness like theirs, and so receive the same reward. All baptized Christians who have died and are now with God in glory are considered saints.

All Saints Day is a day on which we thank God for giving ordinary men and women a share in His holiness and Heavenly glory as a reward for their Faith. In fact, we celebrate the feast of each canonized saint on a particular day of the year. But there are countless other saints and martyrs, men, women, and children, united with God in Heavenly glory, whose feasts we do not celebrate. Among these would be our own parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters who were heroic women and men of Faith. All Saints Day is intended to honor their memory. Hence, today's feast can be called the feast of the Unknown Saint, in line with the tradition of the "Unknown Soldier." According to Pope Urban IV, All Saints' Day is also intended to supply any deficiencies in our celebration of feast of saints during the year. In addition, the feast is observed to teach us to honor

the saints, both by imitating their lives and by seeking their intercession for us before Christ, the only mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5).

We honor the saints for various reasons:

1- The saints put their trust in Christ and lived heroic lives of Faith. St. Paul asks us to serve and honor such noble souls. In his Epistles to the Corinthians, to Philip, and to Timothy, he advises Christians to welcome, serve, and honor those who have put their trust in Jesus. The saints enjoy Heavenly bliss as a reward for their Faith in Jesus. Hence, they deserve our veneration of them.

2- The saints are our role models. They teach us by their lives that Christ's holy life of love, mercy, and unconditional forgiveness can be lived, with God's grace, by ordinary people from all walks of life and at all times.

3- The saints are our Heavenly mediators who intercede for us before Jesus, the only mediator between God and us.

4- The saints are the instruments that God uses to work miracles at present, just as He used the staff of Moses (Ex), the bones of the prophet Elisha (2Kgs 13:21), the towel of Paul (Acts 19:12), and the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15) to work miracles.

Life messages: 1) We need to accept the challenge to become saints. Jesus exhorts us: "Be made perfect as your Heavenly Father is Perfect" (Mt 5:48). St. Augustine asked: "If she and he can become saints, why can't I?".

2) We can take the short cuts practiced by three Teresas:

i) St. Teresa of Avila: Recharge your spiritual batteries every day by prayer, namely, listening to God and talking to Him

ii) St. Therese of Lisieux: Convert every action into prayer by offering it to God for His glory and for the salvation of souls and by doing God's will to the best of one's ability.

iii) St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa): Do ordinary things with great love.