

Sermon

◆ **First Reading:** *Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14*

◆ **Second Reading:** *1 John 3:1-3*

◆ **Gospel:** *Matthew 5:1-12*

To-day we celebrate the Feast of all Saints ; this Feast is a commemoration of the ones who have gone before and have reached their place in Heaven, and we're not just talking about the church's canonical list on the yearly calendar! We're talking about a huge number of those who are in Heaven enjoying the presence of God for all eternity, the 1st reading from Apocalypse gives us an idea of what's going on "up there", st.John the apostle wrote down what he saw in his vision of the Elect(..those destined for the eternal joys of Heaven) in Heaven, he says **"AFTER THAT I SAW A HUGE NUMBER IMPOSSIBLE TO COUNT, OF PEOPLE FROM EVERY NATION, RACE, TRIBE AND LANGUAGE. THEY WERE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE THRONE.....DRESSED IN WHITE ROBES AND HOLDING PALMS IN THEIR HANDS"**

People from every nation, race, tribe & language are the ones who loved and served God during their mortal lives here on earth, these are made up of all sorts of people, housewives, ordinary workers, teachers, parents, bus drivers, from shop assistants to popes and paupers alike, people who struggled with their own sinful inclinations, sometimes they fell into sin but they continually returned to God again and again wanting better union & friendship with the lord-of-Life ; The saints never gave up in their search for Truth and no-one could persuade them to abandon their Faith nor worship of God ;

“so” says you “ah well! that’s all for holy educated people”!.....No, that’s not true! many of the saints couldn’t read nor write, st.Benedict Labre had mental illness, st.Jerome had a bad temper, he was constantly challenged to keep it under control, st.Bridget of Sweden, the patroness of this parish had a domineering character, the founder of my own religious order, st.Arnold Janssen was difficult to live with, st.Augustine, before his conversion, had a lustful approach to women so are we talking about perfect people in pursuit of perfect holiness?, No! we’re talking about imperfect people, who carried with them a sincere desire to become the friends of God on earth in order to reach their place in Heaven ;

Where’s the starting point on the road to sainthood?

It starts in your life & mine, we make a decision! We choose to put God FIRST in our lives and STICK with that decision for the rest of our mortal lives, nothing must get in the way, “BUT” says you “things do get in the way”! worldliness can get in the way, our sinful thoughts, words & actions can get in the way, along with our selfish habits, YES! a lot can get in the way from here to sainthood, but that’s precisely what you and I have to deal with. We have to constantly ask the Holy Spirit to help us deal with our imperfections and follow the example of the saints gone before us, they recognized their sinfulness and decided to **INVITE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP THEM REACH PURITY OF SOUL**, that is the spiritual task of a lifetime ; the Saints refused to give up when they happily realized that holiness cannot be attained on their own merits,

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THEIR NEED OF GOD, THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

AND lastly, I don't know where you AT on your pilgrim journey thru' this short life, but on this Feast of the Saints, we need to be reminded of one thing, and that is **NOTHING IMPURE MAY ENTER HEAVEN**, if that be the case, then all of us are called to sainthood, from every nation, race, tribe and language ; and **BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD...**

.....be well.....stay healthy.....pray for poor families, the homeless, and that the right vaccine for the Covid-19 may soon be discovered

Fr Kieran A. Fitzharris SVD