

Solemnity of All Saints

2013

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- One of the questions about our Catholic faith from others is: “*Why do you Catholics worship saints? You should worship God alone!*”
- Well...we DO worship God alone.
- What would be the point of worshipping a human being? Even saints have no power of their own whatsoever except their prayers of intercession for us to God.
- But we DO honor and venerate our brothers and sisters who have gone before us...those who have fought the good fight and successfully finished the race... and been found worthy of Heaven.
- They are models for us, as well as our brothers and sisters.

- While not specifically in the Bible, Christians have prayed to their Heavenly brothers and sisters since the earliest times of Christianity...even when Christians were hiding in Roman catacombs.
- Non-Catholics often protest: “*Paul says (1 Timothy 2:5) that there is only one mediator between God and men—the man Jesus Christ!*”
- Of course that’s true; only Jesus CAN be mediator, because only He is both God and man.
- Even the Blessed Virgin Mary is only human, and has no power of her own...and is certainly not divine.
- Even she is completely dependent upon the grace of God.
- When we pray before (not TO) a statue or picture, we are using the image for simple remembrance.
- Nobody in the Church worships a hunk of plaster or marble or a painting...or even the person whom the image depicts.
- But a saint’s image simply helps us to recall the virtue of the person depicted, just as looking at a picture of your mom or dad brings back memories.
- Saints’ images are just reminders of our brothers and sisters who have gone before us and who are examples for us to emulate...just like a young person might have an image of an astronaut hanging up—to constantly remind himself of his goal.

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- There IS only one mediator between God and Man, because only one has been, and IS, BOTH God and Man--Jesus Christ.

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- But we are told to pray for one another.
- When we pray to the saints, we are simply asking them as proven friends of God to pray for us.
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- There is only ONE body of Christ, and this includes what is called the Church Militant (which is us...still fighting the good fight), the Church Suffering (the souls in Purgatory, who are guaranteed eventual entry into Heaven), and the Church Triumphant—the saints in Heaven. We are one family...one Body of Christ...with Jesus Himself as our head...all connected.
- St. Paul writes: *“God has so composed the body...that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ...”* (1Cor 12:24-27 RSV)
- Knowing this...the saints pray for us, for they love we who are still struggling more now than ever.
- In the book of Revelation we read: *“...the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints...”* (Revelation 5:8), meaning that the Heavenly saints bring our prayers to God—they intercede for us with God.
- This is the essence of the communion of saints...the members of a single family supporting each other in the eyes of Our Father.
- So...as it says in the letter to the Hebrews: *“...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us...”* (Heb 12:1 RSV)
- ...remembering that the saints were people just like us. And if they are able to follow God with unwavering faith and devotion despite struggle, so are we.
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- A little boy attended a church that had beautiful stained-glass windows.
- He was told the windows contained pictures of many of the saints.
- One day he was asked, *“What is a saint?”*

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- He said eagerly, “*A saint is a person whom the light shines through!*”
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- So let Christ’s light shine through each of us...as it has shone through our brothers and sisters before us.
- Study the saints and imitate them, for as Pope Clement I said: “*Follow the saints, because those who follow them will [themselves] become saints.*”...because they followed Christ.
- And, after all, there is only one real tragedy for us...and that is if, in the end, we do NOT become saints.

Reading 1

[Rv 7:2-4, 9-14](#)

I, John, saw another angel come up from the East,
holding the seal of the living God.
He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels
who were given power to damage the land and the sea,
“Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees
until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”
I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal,
one hundred and forty-four thousand marked
from every tribe of the children of Israel.

After this I had a vision of a great multitude,
which no one could count,
from every nation, race, people, and tongue.
They stood before the throne and before the Lamb,
wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.
They cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne,
and from the Lamb.”

All the angels stood around the throne
and around the elders and the four living creatures.
They prostrated themselves before the throne,
worshiped God, and exclaimed:

“Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving,
honor, power, and might
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me,
“Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?”
I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.”
He said to me,
“These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress;
they have washed their robes
and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6](#)

R. (see 6) **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**
The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.
For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**
Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?
One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**
He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.
Such is the race that seeks him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Reading II

[1 Jn 3:1-3](#)

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us
that we may be called the children of God.

Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us
is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure,
as he is pure.

Gospel

[Mt 5:1-12a](#)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain,
and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.
He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

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Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven.”