

- Today's feast of All Saints Day, as well as tomorrow's feast of All Souls Day, focus us on eternal, ultimate realities.
- As we contemplate death and judgment, today we turn our minds in hope to the joys of Heaven, rejoicing in those saintly souls who are already there, and begging their intercession so that we might one day join them.
- What's so beautiful about this feast is that it reminds us of our great dignity as baptized Christians. It's a dignity that calls us to be saints! Yes, God wants all of us to be saints! But we must do our part in growing in holiness.
- As St. John tells us in our first reading, the saints "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."
- Note well that St. John makes it clear in this description that becoming a saint is no easy matter. As he tells us, the saints are those "who have survived the time of great distress," indicating that becoming a saint entails hardship and suffering on our part.
- But it also requires a reliance on Christ, for St. John also tells us that the saints are those who "have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."
- In other words, the saints have allowed themselves to be covered by God's grace. They have placed themselves beneath the altar of the Cross from which our Lord hung, allowing themselves to be covered by that blood flowing from His wounds.
- For the Blood of Christ is the price of our salvation. Without it, there is no forgiveness of sins. The Blood of Christ is a stream of mercy and the pledge of eternal life.
- It provides victory over demons, it gives courage to martyrs, strength to confessors, and it issues forth virgins – all who give glory to God.
- We receive that Precious Blood of our Lord every time we receive Holy Communion, we are covered with it when we go to confession, and we place ourselves in its presence every time we go to Adoration.
- For us Catholics, the Blood of Christ is ever present and available to us. It's ours for the taking! And it's the Blood of Christ poured out for our salvation that can make us saints.
- As mentioned earlier, becoming a saint is no easy matter, for becoming a saint is nothing short of becoming like Christ Himself!
- You see, everyone in Heaven resembles Christ – and does so in a unique way. As St. Paul tells us today in our 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." To be in Heaven is to be like Christ, and to look upon Him for all eternity.
- Indeed, we are *created* in God's image and likeness. At our baptism, we are clothed in a white garment as a sign of our new sinless dignity, of our Christlike purity.
- Then, we are charged at our baptism to "bring that [sinless] dignity unstained into the everlasting life of Heaven."
- Yet sadly, we all sin, we all stain our baptismal dignity and are in need of restoration. We dirty our robe and mar that image of Christ within us by our sinfulness. Yet God is merciful, and He gives us a means of being restored.
- We restore that image of Christ within us through our reception of the Sacraments, through our prayers and virtuous acts, and by making reparation for sin.

- The saints are those who have restored fully the image of Christ within them while still in this life and thus have no need of Purgatory. They are people who've live a life of Beatitude to a heroic degree!
- And because of this, they now intercede for us to help us along our way!
- This is why we should cultivate friendships with saints. For when we seek to live in friendship with the saints: learning about their lives, imitating their virtues, and asking for their intercession, they really do come to our aid!
- Truly, the saints are not mere accessories to our Catholic Faith. The Communion of Saints is real and essential. For they pray and intercede for us, and they can inspire and encourage us if we let them.
- And this beautiful feast calls us to be among their number when we die.
- As we celebrate this great Solemnity of All Saints, let us remember that, like the saints in Heaven, we are called to be like Christ. Therefore, let us trust in the Blood of Christ so generously poured out on us through the Sacraments of the Church.
- But let us look, as well, to the example of heroic virtue and purity of life provided by the saints, and seek to imitate it for the sake of our souls.
- And like the saints in Heaven, may we live out the Beatitudes with faithfulness and integrity, and embrace whatever hardships and sufferings God allows in our lives, so that we may indeed one day join the saints around God's heavenly throne!