

Homily: All Saints Day 2016: Rev 7:2-4, 9-14; Ps. 24; 1Jn 3:1-3; Mt. 5:8-10

“The universal call to sanctity”

1. **This feast celebrates all the known and unknown saints who are now in Heaven.** We remember their heroic lives at this Mass in order to have the inspiration to follow the Lord in a heroic way ourselves. We are all called to become saints by virtue of **our baptism** and in fact as one writer once said “*the only real tragedy in life is if we do not become a saint!*” Something to ponder! There are saints for every vocation and for every personality. We need to study their lives and encourage our children to do the same. Do we do that? With the advent of the internet there are so many good resources on the lives of the saints that if we don’t take advantage of that, we are missing out on making the Gospel real. **That’s the genius of the saints: they take the theoretical teachings of our Catholic faith and the Gospel and they bring it to life in the concrete.** Think of all the different saints: Thomas, Peter, Paul, Jerome, Augustine, Monica, Mary Magdalene, John Vianney, Therese, Faustina, and Benedict Joseph Labre among others. These are human beings like you and me, but what set them apart is they allowed the Holy Spirit to transform them into the image of Christ in all areas of their lives over a lifetime. They offered their lives *as a living sacrifice* (Rom12:1-2) to the Lord, and they show us that He chooses the weak and makes them strong in Jesus Christ our Lord (Mass Preface of Martyrs).
2. **The lives of the saints should fill us with hope.** After all, if God could win the victory over satan, sin and death by rooting their lives fully in Jesus over time, He can do the same for us, if only we let Him! It is a call to be **generous** with the Lord: to give Him our all instead of our scraps. **When you study the lives of the many saints of our Church, it should encourage us because they overcame many obstacles with God’s grace - so can we!** *The battle to pray, to be charitable, to be sexually chaste, to forgive, to mortify our fallen nature so that the higher man can shine through (see Romans 7), to frequently make a honest confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Confession, to enter into the mystery of the Holy Mass, to live out the spirit of the 10 Commandments & Beatitudes is not*

always an easy thing. There is always, in fact, the temptation in our hearts and lives to take the easy way out: the path of least resistance and selfishness, but in the end that brings **no peace and many regrets.** The saints teach us that sanctity is within everyone's reach. It's there for the taking if we are willing to be generous with God:\; He is NEVER outdone in generosity and in fact wants us all to be saints. All God asks of us is to let Him in fully! It is such a beautiful and noble adventure. Not easy, as life IS NOT EASY as we well know, but it is the way of ultimate meaning and purpose. The path of sin leads to sadness and death. The path of sanctity leads to the foot of **the Cross**, but it is there in union with Jesus that we find true joy and happiness, and the peace that the world cannot give.

- 3. To become a saint means that our lives have become completely rooted in Christ's love.** Sanctity means heroic goodness, not perfection, for in this life we are never perfect or fully free from all taint of sin, but a saint can say truly as St. Paul powerfully states it: "*it is no longer I who live but Christ lives within me.*" Each saint shows the face of Christ in a unique way based on their personality and personal gifts to the world. **Think of a stained glass window** in a Church when the sun shines through it. The glass is still there, even with some small imperfections, but when the sun hits it, we notice the sun shining through and how it makes the glass fully beautiful, despite any flaws. That is what happens to us when we grow in sanctity: the light of Christ shines through us, despite our weakness. Also the sanctity to which we are called is not for ourselves alone, but rather as members of the Mystical Body of the Church, it is a gift in order to help others achieve sanctity as well. We are all in this together. **What a noble call:** *not simply to know our Catholic Faith, but to HEROICALLY LIVE it in all the varied aspects of our life.* May the saints intercede for us, so that at the end of our lives we too may enter into the perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity, i.e., Heaven. **Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.** Sanctity leads us to Heaven. May the prayers of the saints help us to grow closer to that reality each day, by personally living a life of heroic goodness in order to join them in Heaven. God bless you.