

ALL SAINTS' DAY IS OUR FEAST DAY



All Saints' Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1. All Saints' Day emphasizes the universality of the call to sanctity. If we isolate a given saint - Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Dominic Savio, Teresa of Calcutta, John Paul II - they can seem so far beyond us. But All Saints Day emphasizes not only canonized saints but also all the ordinary people, forgotten to history, who God has remembered as saintly. And it reminds us that being a saint is the ordinary goal of Christian life. Everything in the Church - preaching, teaching, scripture, sacraments, the Eucharist, everything - is meant to conduce to the place where we become saints.

All Saints' Day is dedicated to the Saints of the Church, that is, all those who are in heaven. The word saint means "holy one" and all of us are called to be holy. In that sense, this is also our Feast Day, because we are all joined, in and through Jesus Christ, in the communion of saints.

Some holy men and women who have died in the Lord, and lived exemplary lives of proven virtue, including martyrs and those who obviously loved the Lord with all of their hearts, have been canonized by the Church. They are the Saints, with a "capital S". They are our models, witnesses of faith. They are also intercessors, praying for us before our Heavenly Father. This feast honours all the saints of the Church, known and unknown.

Let us look at some interesting definitions of what a saint is. A saint is a person who begins each day with these words: "May the image of Jesus radiate through me this day in each life situation." A saint is a person who prays each day that she be used as an instrument of God's love to bear the burdens of God's children. A saint is a forgiven sinner. A saint is one who makes it easier for others to believe in God. A saint is a sinner who keeps trying.

In a family that was torn apart with hostility, the father, an elderly lawyer, asked a young artist for her advice. She replied, "Here is my prescription. Unless you want to end by killing each other, someone has to say the first gentle word. And you are the one who has the least time left." The true Christian, who is called to be a saint, is always the one who says the gentle word first - the word that breaks the ice and leads to reconciliation. After all, did not God in Christ take the first step in reaching out to us with forgiveness?

A saint is the one who says the gentle word first. A saint is a letter God writes with the Holy Spirit not on paper but on the hearts of people.

I invite you today to learn more about All Saints' Day. I invite you to choose a saint, learn about their life, their conversion, their prayer life, their love of God and the neighbour. Then, pray to that saint that they may intercede before God so that you and I may grow in holiness every day. Heaven is our final destination. Becoming a saint is our ultimate goal.

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