

Trinity XXIII

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Date: 03 November 2024

Preacher: Father Randall Russell

[0 : 00] Hear now a portion of this morning's epistle reading. Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?

And I said to him, Sir, you know. In the name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Ghost. And he said to him, Sir, you know.

For in order to know someone, and I mean to truly know someone, you have to know a thing or two about that person's family or friends.

For example, I don't think anyone could say that they truly knew me, unless they at least knew something about my wife, my mom or dad, or about any of my family and friends.

After all, to truly know someone is also to know something, something about the company that they keep. And that is true not only for us, but is most especially true for God as well.

[1 : 20] It's kind of hard for someone to say that he or she truly knows Jesus without also knowing something about his heavenly father, or his virgin mother, or his twelve disciples, or any other member of Christ's one holy Catholic and apostolic church.

To truly know God is to be intimately close with his family, just as to truly know God's family is to be intimately close with God.

You see, you simply cannot have one without the other, which is why we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, or any other Saints Day for that matter.

The purpose of all these Saints Days is not to elevate any saint as higher than God, but rather to draw us even closer to God through the lives of all his saints.

As a Christian author once wrote, and I quote, it implies no disrespect or irreverence to our Lord if we occasionally switch the emphasis away from him to one of the secondary characters of the gospel story.

[2 : 45] A meditation on, say, the Lord's Supper, directed at St. John or St. Andrew, will tend rather to bring out the personality of Jesus in a still sharper outline.

It is the dramatist trick of interposing minor scenes within the main plot. The rather ridiculous grave diggers preparing for Ophelia's burial in Shakespeare's Hamlet accentuate rather than detract from the main character of Hamlet.

And this is particularly true of the presence of the minor characters in the gospel as well. We learn just as much about the person of Jesus when we concentrate upon Jairus, Zacchaeus, and Simon of Cyrene.

End quote. Furthermore, there are some Protestant Christians who often cry foul whenever more Catholic-minded Christians talk about the saints.

Only to turn around and then praise television shows like The Chosen for bringing people closer to Jesus by focusing on the lives of many of those very same saints.

[4 : 02] For as it turns out, focusing upon the lives of the saints and even remembering and showing honor to the saints doesn't lead to idolatry but can in fact and often does draw one closer to God.

Which when you think of it makes perfect sense because the whole reason a saint is called a saint is solely because of God.

Because of the grace that God has shown us through the lives of all his saints. So today we celebrate the Feast of All Saints in recognition that no man is an island unto himself.

We are called to live in union with God as well as in communion with the rest of God's family. For to know God really is to know God's family.

just as to know God's family really is to know God. For divine love, divine love compels us now to cross that great chasm of time and space in order to worship in the presence of angels and

archangels and all the company of heaven and to embrace a family far, far greater than what we see.

[5 : 29] For this morning we not only recall the words of St. John's revelation written so long ago, but by God's grace we actually participate in that very same revelation in the here and now as well.

For in this morning's epistle we read, Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from?

And I said to him, Sir, you know. These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne dwells among them.

They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat.

For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water.

[6 : 41] And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And if that's not a description of church, I don't know what is.

For St. John's revelation is what happened so long ago on the day of our Lord's ascension through the throne of heaven. And it is what is happening today, this very hour at the Mass.

And St. John's revelation is, by God's grace, what will happen again on the last day at the resurrection of the just.

For we have, are currently, and will again, by God's grace on the day of judgment, continue to worship the Lamb who sits on his throne.

for yesterday, today, and tomorrow, salvation belongs to our God. Therefore, praise him, all you saints on earth and in heaven.

[7 : 47] Praise him, all you saints, both living and at rest. Praise him, all you saints who showed the world the love, the mercy, and the wisdom of Christ.

For the song of salvation is not a solo, but it is a hymn sung by all the saints in union with God and in communion with one another.

For divine love bids us all to embrace a life far, far greater than self and to honor, to remember, and to give thanks for all saints both living and at rest.

For again, to know God, to truly know and love God, is to join in the company of that great cloud of witnesses, all saints, both now and in eternity.

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen.