

The Feast of All Saints' Observed

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Preacher: Fr. Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.! Like the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Or perhaps John the Baptist. Or maybe even one of the Twelve Apostles. For some strange reason, St. Philip comes to mind.

But out of all the many, many saints we could choose, how many of us thought about someone we actually know? How many of us thought about perhaps our own father?

Or our own mother? Or maybe even our grandfather or grandmother? Or better yet, how many of us thought about the person sitting right next to us in the pew?

And really the main point I wish to make here this morning is that the Feast of All Saints is not just the Feast of some saints.

[1 : 33] It is the Feast of all saints. Of both those saints living, as well as those saints who have died, but now live on the other side of glory.

For the Feast of all saints is the Feast of those who are born after the birth of Christ, as well as those saints who are born before the birth of Christ.

For the Feast of all saints is the Feast of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the Feast of every Old Testament patriarch and prophet.

It is the Feast of every New Testament apostle, evangelist, and faithful martyr. For all saints is the Feast of all those whose good deeds are well known by all, as well as all those whose good deeds have long been forgotten, at least on this side of eternity.

For today, today is the Feast of every unsung hero of the kingdom of God.

[2 : 55] It is the Feast of all parents who have diligently sought to raise their children in the faith with little to no recognition. And it is the Feast of every widow or shut-in who never would have chosen the monastic life for themselves, but who, when that life was thrust upon them, accepted it with grace and devoted themselves to a life of prayer.

For today is the Feast of all saints, the Feast of all saints, the Feast of Betty Teske, and the Feast of Cal Whitaker.

It is the Feast of every baptized believer, both on this side of glory and beyond. The Feast of all those who have ever strived to put God and neighbor first, and himself or herself last.

For it would be wrong to think of this Feast as only the celebration of just a small group of particularly saintly individuals.

Just as it would be equally wrong to assume that today only concerns those who have never, ever struggled with sin.

[4 : 22] For the truth is that no saint was born perfect. For Adam and Eve did not listen to God, and Noah got drunk.

Sarah laughed when the Lord made a promise, and Jacob stole his brother's blessing. Moses committed murder, and King David murder plus adultery.

His son Solomon may have been wise, but he often chose to live as a fool. And Thomas doubted. Peter denied God to his face, and Matthew stole from the poor to make himself rich.

None of these men or women ever lived perfect lives free from sin. All of them struggled, and all of them fell short the glory of God, many even after they were called to live a new life.

But let us not forget that the definition of a saint is not someone who is perfect, but rather someone who is in the process of being perfected by God's grace.

[5 : 57] For the biblical definition of a saint is simply someone who is set apart or made holy by God in order to live and to grow in holiness and righteousness forever.

And yes, some saints truly are more saintly than others. But that should not discourage us.

If anything, that should only encourage us. Because at one time, all the highest tier of saints were exactly where we are.

But by God's grace and through their prayers, our level of sanctity will one day match their own if, if and only if, we continue to persevere in the faith until our life's end.

For the true beauty of All Saints Day, and this is so important, the true beauty of All Saints Day, is that it reminds us that every sinner can have a future.

[7 : 21] Just as every saint has a past. And we do both Christ and his church a great disservice whenever we forget this fact.

Whenever we forget that every great saint had a humble beginning. beginning. So let us now follow their example and humble ourselves before the Lord our God.

As we remember, we all, we all are in this together. For there simply is no such thing as a saint who is an independent and self-made man.

for we are all dependent upon Christ Jesus to serve as our mediator between God and man. Just as we are all dependent upon one another, as we are all dependent upon all the saints to serve as faithful intercessors on our behalf, praying for one another, worshipping alongside one another, and encouraging one another in the faith.

And does that mean that the saints in heaven pray for us? Yes. Absolutely. A hundred percent. And does that mean that the saints on earth may pray for them?

[8 : 57] Well, if you believe that there is only one holy Catholic and apostolic church, despite all the sad denominational differences on this side of glory, and if you believe that the saints in heaven continue to be a part of that one holy church, and if you acknowledge that growing in the fear and love of God is something that goes on and on for all of eternity, then yes, we may pray for them as they pray for us.

In fact, this is exactly what we do each and every Sunday when in the prayer for the whole state of Christ's church, it is the prayer for the entire church, not just a part.

The prayer for the whole state of Christ's church, we pray this, and we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service, and to give us grace so to follow their good examples that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.

for Christ Jesus is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living, because the true worship of God is eternal and knows no end, which is why it could be said that every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are celebrating the eternal feast of all saints.

because all means all. For none of the saints are lost and all worship together as one before the throne, for all are in the same presence of the one true God.

[11 : 09] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.