

Solemnity of All Saints - November 1, 2021

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Today's Solemnity of All Saints is the day we celebrate **all** those Saint John describes in our first reading from Revelation, "... a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue ..." This **multitude** ... represents all of **our** brothers and sisters in Christ, known and unknown, who have moved on to their eternal reward. So what kind of people **were** these saints we honor today? I think sometimes we tend to think of them as larger than life and possessing a holiness **we** could **never** hope to achieve. What sort of people **were** the saints?

We could look at the apostles ... at James and John ... the brothers who wanted exalted positions **above** their brother apostles. After a little more time ... being taught by our savior ... look what they became. We could look at Nathaniel (or Bartholomew, if you prefer ... the namesake of my youngest son). He was a ... to put it bluntly ... a **bigot**. ... "Can anything good come from Nazareth." Then He met Jesus. And ... of course ... we **must** look at Peter ... our first pope. Who so exasperated Jesus that at one point our savior had to command: "Get behind me, Satan". And of course he also denied Jesus.

We could look at Augustine. During his early years of fast and loose living he took a mistress. He quipped: "God grant me chastity ... but not yet"! He once told his mother, St. Monica, that there would be no problems between them ... if she just gave up her faith! But after his conversion ... he became a priest and then a bishop. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church there are more quotations from St. Augustine than from any other writer.

We could also look at Thomas More who came from a Catholic family, but no more or less Catholic than those around him. In his early career as a lawyer, Thomas was known to be quite duplicitous. Then something happened that transformed More from a somewhat mediocre Christian of his day to a saint for the ages, or if you prefer, **a man for all seasons**. More was forced to choose between his conscience and his king, his faith and his social position and ... **ultimately** ... between his life and his death. After much agonizing and equivocating ... Thomas More chose to be faithful to his Faith even at the cost of his life.

Recalling the Old Testament ... we see that Moses even committed **murder** ... before his call by God. And David consumed by **lust** ... committed adultery **and** murder ... before repenting.

Even St. Teresa of Avila ... in a moment of extreme frustration ... was heard to declare "that if this is how God treats his friends, it's no wonder He has so few."

So just what sort of people are the saints? They were ordinary people just like you and me ... they were imperfect sinners who made a **choice** ... to respond to God's grace.

So this great Solemnity also serves to remind us of that great tenant of our Faith ... the Communion of Saints ... which also includes **us** and also those we commemorate tomorrow ... the Souls in Purgatory ... because their salvation **also** ... is assured!

This solemnity ... then ... reminds us that we are **all** saints. As members of the Communion of Saints ... sainthood is ours to lose. When we received the Sacrament of Baptism, we were admitted into the Body of Christ. We were cleansed of all sins. Now we have but to do those things our Savior asks of us. In our second reading from St. John ... we are **assured** of God's love ... indeed ... we are assured us that we are God's **children**. ... **WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD!** ... what greater love ... what greater gift could God ever give us! If God waited for us to become **perfect** ... to love us ... He **never** would. No! ... To be loved by our God ... to be children of God ... we need do nothing ... absolutely nothing!