

**November 01, 2020**  
**Solemnity of All Saints**  
**Rev 7:2-4, 9-14**  
**Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6**  
**1 John 3:1-3**  
**Mt 5:1-12a**

## **BECOMING SAINTS!**

Two great commandments were conveyed to us by Jesus last Sunday – **loving God** and **loving others**. These two great commandments are very important. They have the same value. We cannot choose one and disregard the other. They must go together in practicing our faith in Christ Jesus. To dichotomize the two is a disservice to the faith. On the other hand, the true essence of what it means to follow, and worship God is in loving him and loving others.

We are celebrating today the **Solemnity of All Saints**. These were the people who gave their best in practicing these two great commandments. In living these two great commandments they proved themselves to be 'children of God.' They allowed themselves to be God's instruments in spreading his message to all. These holy people were aware/conscious of God's grace working in their lives. They knew that without God's grace whatever good, beautiful and true they had done would not be possible. Thus, their hearts were always bursting with gratitude to God. They were truly stewards of the Gospel.

Here inside of our Church we have some statues/images of saints – **St. Joseph, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Anthony de Padua, St. Damien of Molokai, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Lucy, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Marianne Cope**. Let us be clear that we don't worship and adore the saints. Adoration belongs to God alone for he is divine. Veneration belongs to the saints for they are human like us. *(Point out the difference when praying the Litany of the Saints – Have mercy on us...pray for us)* What we do is honor them for the examples they showed us and we ask them to intercede for us.

Let me share with you three of the saints we see here in Church.

**St. Therese of Lisieux** (1873-1897), for example, demonstrated to us that everything we do, no matter how small, must be done in the spirit of love. She said, "**Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, count as nothing.**" She also said, "**When one loves, one does not calculate.**"

**St. Damien of Molokai** (1840-1889), our very own, showed us his love for God by taking care of the sick and abandoned in Kalaupapa. It was a difficult task and yet he was able to do it. It was his love for God that he stayed until the end of his life serving the poorest of the poor. He said, "**My greatest pleasure is to serve the Lord in his poor children rejected by other people.**"

**St. Francis of Assisi** (1181-1226) came from a very rich family. His parents had clothing business. His father wanted him to take over the business. Prior to his conversion, holiness was not part of his dream. What he was longing for was prestige and glory of a great warrior. It did

not happen. Instead, he was humiliated when he was taken as a prisoner, chained, and placed in a dungeon, during the war between Assisi and Perugia. To cut the story short, Francis' journey to conversion started when he was praying inside St. Damiano Church and heard Christ crucified said to him, "**Francis, repair my church.**" From then on, he left, literally, everything behind, including his inheritance, to respond to God's call. His love for God helped him see that 'blessedness is possible to those who are poor in spirit.' He said, "**Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received - only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.**"

These are just some of the saints we are honoring today. We actually have plenty saints in the Catholic Church. Canonized or not, these holy people are good role models for us in living our faith in Christ Jesus. The examples they have shown teach us that **loving God** and **loving our neighbor** are not impossible to do. Like them, through the grace of God, we can live holy lives of mercy, love, and forgiveness.

The world will whisper to us: "**No! You cannot be holy. You have so many sins!**" If we believe what the world whispers to us, then we are accepting that we are 'hopeless cases.' We are conveying a message that we are people of despair. As Catholic Christians, such mind-set is not acceptable. We are not 'hopeless cases.' We are people of hope and the stories of the saints are living testaments of the power of God making his people holy.

Our celebration today challenges us to respond positively to the call to holiness. Yes, we are sinners called to holiness. We are called to be saints. Through God's grace, becoming saints are always possible. St. Augustine once said, "**If he and she can become saints, why can't I?**"

In this Mass, let us ask the Lord Jesus to increase in us our desire for holiness. Let us also thank him for giving us these holy people as our role models and heavenly mediators/intercessors as we continue our faith-life journey here on earth.

**All the saints in heaven, pray for us!**