

Homily: 01 November 2009 (All Saints)

Today, we celebrate the Saints of our Church. Admittedly, the Saints play an essential role in the life of our Church. Just look at how many times they impact our life in the Church. We have days throughout the entire year that we dedicate to various Saints. We also name parishes after Saints, such as our very own, St. Odilia. The founders of our country even named some of the cities after our revered Saints. It is probable that many of you selected various Saint names for your confirmation name.

Which should lead to the question: What is the point of the saints? We know the Saints are important, we know they have something good to offer us...but what is the point of having all of these saints?

There are two major reasons that we have saints in the life of our Church.

The first is that the Saints still intercede for us. The reality of our Church is that it spends the bounds of space and time. It reaches far beyond what we can see and touch and actually extends into heaven. We are all part of the Church of God, both the baptized here on earth now, those in Purgatory, and the ones who are in heaven.

The definition of a Saint is anyone who is in heaven. That is what John was referring to in the first reading where he said that he saw, "a great multitude" that was from every corner of the earth who were in heaven, living the fullness of joy in the presence of God. Saints are anyone who is in heaven. This includes those whom we know, the ones with the title "saint" before their name...AND...those who we don't know, but are still in heaven.

These saints, while separated from us by the tangible world are still a part of our Church, still a part of this Body of Christ. As a result, they are still praying for us. I would guess that every one of us, at some point in our lives has heard the request, "Would you please pray for me?" Such as, "Fr. Rask, would you please pray that the Vikings beat the Packers today because I took a second mortgage out on the parish and bet it on the Vikings." When we receive a request for prayers, we oblige and the truth is that our prayers **do** have an effect in those people's lives...and so too for the Saints in heaven. The Saints in heaven are still concerned with what happens to us here on earth. They are still alert, aware, and concerned...and so they pray for us...the saints are important because they still intercede for us.

The second reason that the saints are important for us is because...they are an inspiration for us. What is important for us is to realize that the saints were not just "born holy." I think that too often, we can fall into the temptation to deify the saints, we treat them like mini-gods. We can sometimes think that the Saints are just these ones who have some infused grace that prevented them from having a tough time in life or they didn't have any struggles. The truth is, the saints often had very difficult lives; they were faced with real situations that put them into situations where they **chose**, with their own free will, to choose God. An example is St. Gianna who was a medical doctor, wife, and mother of three. She was one who not only chose to devote her work, life, and marriage to God. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II and now, today, her name has become one of the most popular names for children. St. Gianna, like all of the saints is

meant to inspire us and show us that all of us are not only **called** to be saints, but...now get this...we can actually **become**...saints!

Becoming a saint, it is not something just for the priests and the nuns...but it is something that all people are called to be...and, guess what, you **can** be a saint! Have you ever sung the song, "Oh when the saints?" Think about what you sing. "Oh Lord I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in." So if we are called to become saints, and we can become saints...how? In the gospel reading, we heard Jesus give us the classic beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the meek; blessed are the merciful..." but sometimes these seem a outlandish or difficult to attain...they may even seem, in practical to our lives...but the truth is, the saints stand as the ones who actually **show** us what it means to live out our call to holiness. See, the saints **did** what we are still **striving** to do.

Our Church expands beyond the physical world to include the saints in heaven. Those who exist in the triumph of heaven continue to pray and intercede for us. They also stand as an inspiration showing us that normal people like us can become saints.

Christians, become who you are: saints.