

Where are you from?

Sounds like an easy question, doesn't it?

When I was going to college in-state, I'd just say the town nearest where I grew up. When I went to graduate school out-of-state, I was from Michigan. Sometimes someone would ask "upper or lower peninsula." But for the most part, that was usually as far as it went.

Overseas in the military, I was from the United States.

It all depends on your perspective, I guess.

Today is the Solemnity of All Saints. And in the First Reading from the Book of Revelation, one of the elders in the vision asks St. John:

Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?

They are, of course, the Saints. Or as the elder states in the text:

These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

Sounds good. But it has a sort-of 'apocalyptic' sound to it.

In the Second Reading, from the First Letter of St. John, he reminds his readers that

we are God's children now

And continues to point out that we don't know all the details of how that all plays out, but the most important thing is that

*we shall be like [God],
for we shall see [God] as he is*

The Gospel is St. Matthew's rendition of the Beatitudes. Eight statements of those who will be blessed ... *the poor in spirit ... they who mourn ... the meek ... they who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... the merciful ... the clean of heart ... the peacemakers ... [and] they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.*

And along with being blessed, what they will be blessed with.

These eight statements seem to be out-of-sync with our 21st century thinking.

Be bold! Smile! Assert yourself! Stand up for your rights! Hit 'em back twice as hard! Do whatever makes you happy! Fight back! Go along to get along.

Yet, Christianity is counter-cultural. That's not what we are supposed to do or what we are supposed to be as disciples of Jesus Christ.

We are all, by our baptism, called to be Saints. Perhaps not canonized saints like we have displayed for veneration today. The two reliquaries are St. John Vianney and St. Anne. But we are called to be saints.

We are supposed to be living out our calling as *God's children* ... so that we can *be like God* ... and *see God as he is*.

And it requires perseverance. We need to survive our particular *times of great distress*. Yet by our baptism, we are *washed ... in the Blood of the Lamb*.

Easy to say, I guess. But hard to do.

But the quick answer to the question of "*who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?*" is ...

Who are they? They're us. And they're people just like us.

And where did they come from? Right here.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for the graces to persevere in our calling to be *God's children*. Let us pray for the spiritual strength to live out our Christian calling ... to live out our baptismal vows ... to live out the beatitudes in an upside-down world that has other attitudes.

Let us receive, from this altar, the spiritual food to strengthen us ... so that day-by-day ... we might grow in holiness and virtue.