

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints.

There was a designation, used perhaps more in the past, of the Church as having three divisions: Church Militant, Church Suffering, and Church Triumphant.

The Church Militant is us ... the word *militant* comes from the Latin *militēs* which means to serve in the army. We are serving in the Church through our various vocations as married couples and spouses, single people, religious, and clergy.

The Church Suffering are those who have gone ahead of us through death and await the resurrection. Suffering has two meanings - one is *to be allowed*, as in *suffragette*, someone who is allowed to vote ... and what we tend to think of these days which is to *persevere*. Our beloved dead have been let in and are asked to persevere for a time ... usually thought of as Purgatory ... a time of waiting until the end of time.

The Church Triumphant are those who are the Saints in Heaven ... who share in the vision of God ... worshipping the Trinity with the angels. Triumphant comes from another Latin word meaning a *song of praise*, or a *celebration of an accomplishment*.

And that is our purpose on this day - a celebration of the saints in glory. Our Scripture readings give us a glimpse or reference into these three divisions of the Church.

The Gospel provides us with the Beatitudes - commandments for living in the Kingdom of God. The Beatitudes are for us as admonitions to be meek and merciful ... to hunger and thirst for righteousness ... to be peacemakers, and to be clean of heart ... and to realize that our reward is not in this life, but in heaven.

St. Paul reminds us of that as well, reassuring his readers - and us as well - that while we are God's children, our reward "*has not yet been revealed.*" And that with those in Purgatory, we should desire to "*[make] [ourselves] pure, [just] as [God] is pure.*"

And finally, in St. John's Revelation, he shares with us the heavenly vision of saints and angels around the throne of God. This, too, is our heavenly destiny ... but not yet. And so we aspire to live for the kingdom, and to purify our hearts and our lives ... until that day when Christ will call us to Himself.

Saints, of course, are not just plaster or wood statues or icons ... or these days, plastic or polycarbonate statues or icons. The saints were real people - just like us - with imperfections and struggles ... and coming from all walks of life.

There is an old saying - every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.

[Within the saints, there are divisions. We hear this played out in the Litany of Loreto - a prayer where we beg Our Lady's intercession under her many titles. Several of those titles reflect the titles of these divisions ... and we hear Our Blessed Mother called, not only Help of Christians, but also: Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs, Queen of Prophets, Queen of Apostles, Queen of Martyrs, Queen of Confessors, Queen of Virgins, and of course: Queen of all Saints.]

And so, today we commemorate our brothers and sisters who stand "*before the throne and before the Lamb wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.*" [The Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all the Saints. United around the Throne of God, with Christ the Lamb in Eternity.] This, too, is our eternal destiny ... and we look toward those who have arrived to cheer us on and intercede for us as we make our way through life ... hoping to one day join them - to be with our Lord and savior ... for eternity.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us ask for the prayers of the saints in glory ... as they intercede for us ... may we persevere in living our lives for Christ and for His Kingdom.