

Homily for the Solemnity of All Saints – B

Readings Apocalypse 7: 2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3: 1-3; Matthew 5: 11-28



Fr Michael says:

Today we keep our family and friends, who have served the Lord and who have gone forth to celebrate and rejoice in the Communion of Saints, which they helped to build up and render visible during their time on earth with us! We give thanks and praise for what we have received from so many people over the course of our lives and this then is carried over into the way we live our Journey as the Saints of God here on earth.

It is important for us to see things in this open way as our lives are indeed the raw material by which we come to salvation. Cardinal Newman's wonderful prayer, with which we have become more familiar since his beatification, sums this up beautifully, with the underlying realisation of the profound truth contained in his words: "to change is to grow; to have changed often brings us to perfection." We are indeed God's instruments, journeying we know not the way clearly, but nevertheless we are instruments doing something which we alone can do. We have the vision of John in mind today, living the fullness of God's life in His Kingdom! We are created in love as God's children, called to see Him as He really is, as long as we live our daily Christian lives with that hope alight in our hearts!

With the Beatitudes, we are presented with the qualities that we need to live this life as Saints, as fully as we can. A word of caution given through an analogy! If we are to appreciate wood as would a carpenter, especially tropical woods like teak and mahogany, we can only see it as it is – without ornament or paint. We enhance it to draw out its inner beauty. To see such wood painted no matter how well is to falsify it and take away its reality. This is perhaps how we see our Saints; if it is too adorned we lose their humanity, what makes them tick! They did not become saints through being false to themselves – their spirituality draws out what is inside – grace builds on nature and we are called to enhance ourselves fully. Let's take time to recognise what we have which builds us up as Saints – our lives of love and service for others, because we draw so much from them in our own Journey.

Piety is not a substitute for goodness: there is no goodness without holiness and vice versa. It is the essence of sanctity: it is GOODNESS we seek not happiness – such is the aim of our lives. If we have feelings of dis-satisfaction, then we can wonder if we are indeed on the right road.

Saints are like windows, through them the light of God's wisdom streams into our world, banishing darkness, brightening the road of uncertain travellers. Through them the warmth of God's love radiates through our world, banishing coldness and warming the hearts of even the most forlorn of His creatures'. Through them, we catch glimpses of another world, a world that lies not just beyond the walls of our earthly home, but even beyond the walls of our earthly home, but even beyond the stars!