

**ALL SAINTS' DAY 2019**  
**SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH**  
**FATHER CRAIG LOONEY**

**REVELATION 7.2 St. MATTHEW 5.1**



Who are the saints of God? We often think saints are only those who have their pictures on holy cards or have churches named after them. They indeed are Saints of God. Others went about their work quietly...like our patron Saint Joseph...he is known in Holy Scripture not for the words he said...but for the actions he took!

The word *saint* comes from the Latin word *sanctus* and means both *holy person* and *holy thing*. We are made *holy...whole and complete and presentable to God our Father...by Jesus' sacrificial death on the Cross*. The *holy* thing we belong to is what we say about ourselves in the Apostles' Creed...***the Communion of Saints***.

Sainthood and the Communion of Saints are not something we can achieve on our own. We can't earn either. We become Saints of God and are gifted with membership in the Communion of Saints at our baptism. When we talk about the Communion of Saints we should think about all of the people who have been positive role models for us...sometimes in extraordinary ways...more often in the simple ways they lived their lives.

All of us are bound together, as the Collect tells us, in a fellowship that includes all Christians living and dead. Saint Paul calls the Church a mystical body with Jesus as its head. From the moment we are baptized and become part of that mystical body...the Church...we are not left alone. Our fellowship is strengthened when we pray and worship and receive Holy Communion together. And at every Mass we join with all of the Angels and Saints in heaven and on earth and say, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory".

All Saints' Day reinforces our belief death doesn't separate us from the love of Jesus or from the Communion of Saints. At every Mass we remember by name those who have died and ask that God will bless us too so we can follow their examples. At yesterday's All Souls' Day Mass, we remembered by name our family and friends...and all other Christians unknown to us...who have died

and ask God that they "may go from strength to strength in the life of perfect service" in heaven.

We can meet the saints of God anywhere and at any time. We can meet them in the best of times and in the worst of times. They help us celebrate special good times...they can make all the difference in helping us through tough times. The Saints of God are just like us...and we ask God to help us be just like them.

In the Collect we ask God to help us follow the examples of the many saints who happily have done his work, and get ready for the "unspeakable" joy that awaits us in heaven. In John's Gospel...Jesus tells us he has gone to make room for us in heaven. We believe what Jesus says. The joy that awaits us there is what the writer of Hebrews calls the hope we have for what we have not yet seen.

There is no better description of the fellowship of All Saints and the unspeakable joy that awaits us in heaven than what Saint John wrote in the reading from Revelation:

*"He who sits on the throne will protect them with his presence. Never again will they hunger or thirst: neither sun nor any scorching heat will burn them, because the Lamb, who is in the center of the throne, will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes".*

On this All Saints' Day and every day we talk about the Holy Ones of God...who are patient and brave and true in the work God has called them to do. We share in that work...because we are Saints of God too.

There were millions of Saints of God going about doing his work long ago...there are millions of Saints of God today...still doing his work. They work, they fight, they live and many die for the Lord they love and know.

All Saints' Day is about those of us here today...and all of the other saints who make up the Church...some we know...some we don't know. They are all of them Saints of God. They are just like you and me...and we ask God to help us be just like them.

