

NOVEMBER 1, 2019
Solemnity of All Saints
Matthew 5: 1-12a

WE ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

Today, we are celebrating the Solemnity of All Saints. This is special feast day for those unknown saints, that is saints who are not canonized, those who are in heaven whose holiness is known only to God but no particular feast day. Today, this is dedicated for them.

What is the history of this feast day? All Saints Day is a surprisingly old feast. It arose out of the Christian tradition of celebrating the memorial of saints on the anniversary of their martyrdom. When martyrdoms increased during the persecutions of the late Roman Empire, local dioceses instituted a common feast day in order to ensure that all martyrs, known and unknown, were properly honored. By the late fourth century, this common feast was celebrated in Antioch, and Saint Ephrem the Syrian mentioned it in a sermon in 373. In the early centuries, this feast was celebrated in the Easter season, and the Eastern Churches, both Catholic, and Orthodox, still celebrate it then, tying the celebration of the lives of the saints with Christ's Resurrection. The current date of November 1 was instituted by Pope Gregory III (731-741), when he consecrated a chapel to all the martyrs in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. He ordered his priests to celebrate the Feast of All Saints annually. This celebration was originally confined to the diocese of Rome, but Pope Gregory IV (827-844) extended the feast to the entire Church and ordered it to be celebrated on November 1. www.learnreligions.com

There is a great multitude of saints that nobody could count because God is rich in mercy, love and compassion. We are all welcome to His place because "In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." (John 14:2 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA) We have a place there for all of us. In there, we follow Jesus Christ, our Savior, the one who is "the Way,

the Truth and the Life.” (John 14:6 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA) Throughout His life, he taught us by word and example on how to live a good and worthwhile life, to be the face of Him here on earth so that we can be citizens of heaven. Let our everyday life be a witness of our own little way of holiness. Doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way, we can be citizens of heaven. We have a lot of saints even in our midst: those people who listen to our problems, who are always there helping us, and sacrificing things for us, those who are serving in our altar every mass, reading the Word of God, people who are used by the Lord to distribute communion or even those who are in the pews who put into practice what they heard and received. Doing all these things make us one step closer to heaven, saints who are not canonized by joyful to be with the Lord.

My brothers and sisters, today’s feast is reminding us: we can be saints by doing our ordinary works with love, patience, humility and compassion. Saints are not made in heaven; they are made here on earth.