

## **All Saints**

Today, the feast of All Saints, we celebrate all the Saints in heaven but we concentrate on the ones who became saints in ordinary and hidden ways, and who will never be canonised.

## **Apocalypse 7:2-4. 9-14**

John sees a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language.

## **1 John 3:1-3**

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children.

## **Matthew 5:1-12**

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.



## **Reflection 1.**

Anytime you come to Mass it's not just you & the people who turn up here – even though there may be good many there on Sundays. With you and me are all the saints as well as the countless angels of heaven

This is reflected especially in the first Eucharistic prayer of the Mass ('The Roman Canon'). The list of Saints in that ancient list may strike you as a bit odd.

Before the consecration, Our Lady is, quite rightly, mentioned first. Then, a 'new' addition (1962) St Joseph. St Peter is next, with St Paul, plus 10 other Apostles (Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon & Thaddeus). You'll notice that missing from the list is Matthias, the Apostle chosen by lot after the death of Judas Iscariot, but he's mentioned in the list of saints **after** the consecration.

At this earlier point in the Mass (before consecration) there **are** 12 Apostles – (counting St Paul, who became known as **the** Apostle) – and they're balanced by 12 more saints, all of them martyrs.



### **THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES**

In the early centuries of the Church, martyrdom (word literally means "witness") was closely associated with the holiest of all prayer and worship, the Eucharist. They would, usually, celebrate Mass at the tombs of the martyrs. In this way there was, at Mass, a bridging between heaven and earth.

The first 5 of these martyrs are early popes: Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus and Cornelius. Then comes St Cyprian; he had a big row with the pope of his day, but was reconciled at his martyrdom.

Next comes Lawrence. Lawrence was the very model of a deacon. He counted the poor as the treasure of the Church. After him, 5 laymen: Chrysogonus, John & Paul, Cosmas & Damian.

Most of us don't know much about these laymen. They were all people connected with the early Church in Rome, which is where the Canon of the Roman rite of the Mass was first developed.

There's a church that probably dates to the 4<sup>th</sup> century dedicated to St Chrysogonus. If you go to Rome, you'll find it in the Trastevere, on the west of the Tiber. The other laymen, John & Paul, were also martyrs. They were buried and venerated in a church on the Caelian hill, one of the famous Seven Hills of Rome. It was built, in his large house, by a Roman senator of the time, a friend of St Jerome, called Pammachius. This was in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The other laymen, Cosmas & Damian, are perhaps better known. They're revered as good doctors. One legend has it that they, memorably, transplanted the leg of a dead black man on to a grateful white recipient - not impossible, but the legend is 'unreliable'. There's a Church in centre of Rome that dates back to the sixth-century dedicated to these two. In that Church there's a mosaic which shows Cosmas & Damian being presented to Christ in majesty, by St Peter & St Paul.

After the consecration we've got the following saints: John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia & Anastasia.

**John** is John the Baptist, **Stephen** is the Deacon & first martyr, (he takes up two chapters in the Acts of the Apostles). **Matthias**, as I've already said, is the Apostle chosen to replace Judas.

Also in the Acts of the Apostles, there's an account of the activities of St **Barnabas**; he's the one who persuaded the other Apostles to trust St Paul & later invited Paul to work in Antioch.



Antioch soon had as its own bishop (he's the next one mentioned) **Ignatius**. Ignatius (not to be confused with the much later founder of the Jesuits) was sent to Rome by the state authorities for martyrdom in about 110. On his way to Rome he wrote a series of letters, looking forward to being 'ground like corn by the teeth of the lions'.

The only thing we know for certain about **Alexander** is his martyrdom. The next two are **Marcellinus**, a priest, and, sharing the same date of martyrdom and the same feast-day, is another **Peter**, an exorcist.

Then 7 women: all martyrs. **Felicity & Perpetua** were killed in 203. An account of their brave end is both authentic and interesting. (There's a paperback in print of 'the Passion of St Perpetua').

St **Agatha** is another who had a brave & cruel martyrdom. Then **Lucy, Agnes & Cecilia**. There's lovely 6<sup>th</sup>-century mosaic of these 3 in Ravenna. St Agnes with a lamb at her feet. The woollen 'pallium'— the badge of office that the pope gives to archbishops— is still woven from wool from lambs blessed on St Agnes's day. St Cecilia is always associated with music. Details of St Lucy, whose name means light, are shrouded in the darkness of time.

Last of all comes **Anastasia**. One of the first parish churches in Rome was built by a woman named Anastasia. About a century later there was a martyr named Anastasia, so they dedicated the Church to her.

So there we are: 39 saints in the first Eucharistic Prayer. Some chosen because they're in the Gospels or other parts of the New Testament; others because they were martyrs or because of the devotion given to them in the early church in Rome.

All of this almost random 'cloud of witnesses' round our altar, shows the unity we, the Church on earth, have with the saints in heaven – more than ever during Mass and above all on the feast of All the Saints.

## Reflection 2.



In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed the character he expected from his followers. The "Beatitudes," in which Jesus exalted, was the attitude of trust and humility represented by the poor, the suffering and persecuted. At the time of Jesus, affliction and poverty, were thought to be punishment for your sins, and good health and

material prosperity were seen as rewards for your righteousness. Jesus reversed the human expectations of people who were thought to be fortunate. He announced that **true** happiness (Greek: *makarios* – blessedness) was not found in wealth and power. Jesus promised eternal reward to everyone who humbly sought God's will despite hardships. But the "blessedness" that the disciples received is not some future glory; it is the blessedness that exists in the here and now. Jesus exemplified every Beatitude. He was poor and he was gentle and meek. He grieved over sin and he hungered and thirsted for God's justice. He was merciful and he was single-hearted in his desire to do God's will. Jesus suffered persecution and died to bring about God's kingdom. He gave us the ideal that every Christian should constantly pursue in order to be holy people, worthy of God's reign.

Pope Francis said,

*"There is no Saint without a past, and there is no sinner without a future."*

### Reflection 3.



All Christians were called "saints" (Greek, hagiois, 2 Cor 1:2) in the early Church. Saints are made holy by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. After their death, some Christians are officially recognized by the Church as "Saints" for their exemplary sanctity. These individuals are models of a virtuous life. They give us hope for the blessed state that we all strive to attain. The spiritual union between all the faithful, living and dead, is called the "Communion of Saints."

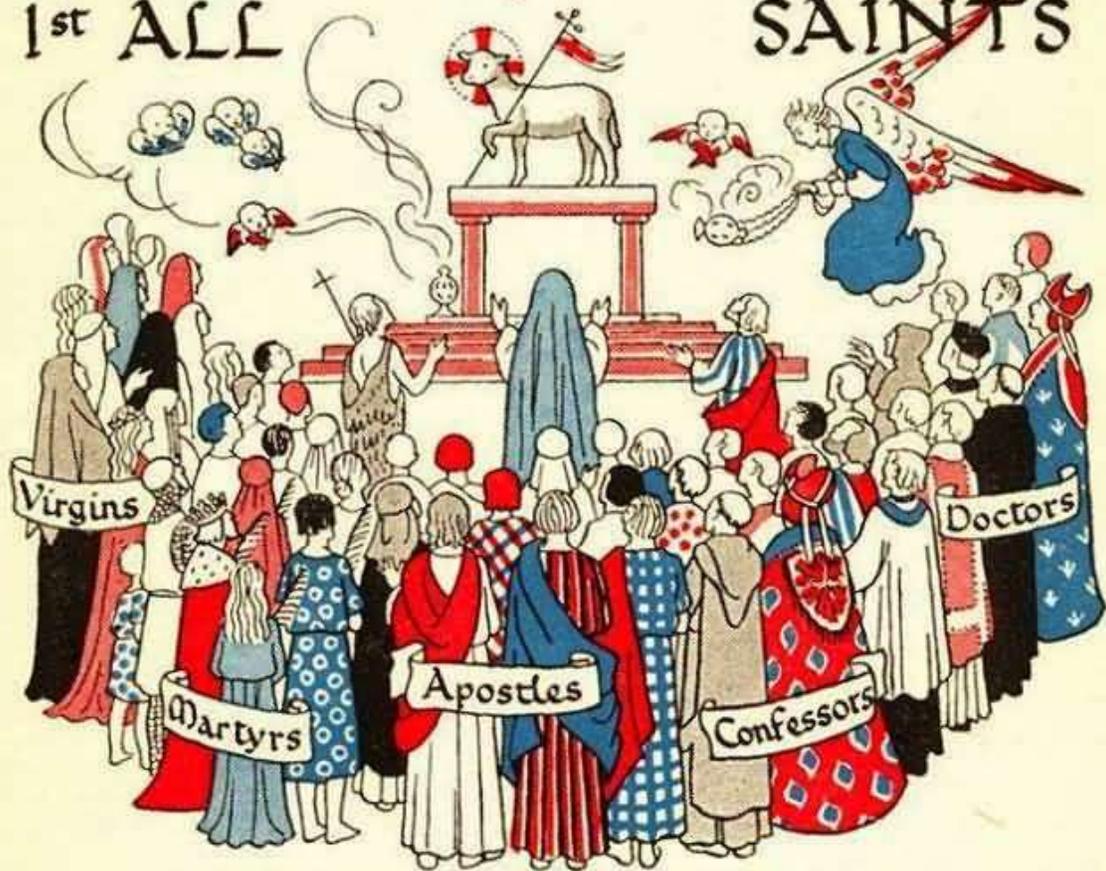
About the year 1000, people started seeking the Pope's authority in the matter of canonisation of individuals who they deemed worthy of being named Saints. Over the years,

procedures for canonisation have become more complex. The first step towards Sainthood is when a person is declared "venerable," a Servant of God. This stage requires that a candidate has lived a life of faith and high morals. The second stage, with the title of "Blessed," is beatification. For this stage, the candidate must have influenced an extraordinary event, which the Church recognizes as "miraculous," meaning it cannot be explained by laws of human science. Advocates for the nominee collect the evidence, a biography, while a "devil's advocate" researches evidence that the nominee may not deserve the title Saint. The third stage, carrying the title "Saint," requires evidence of a second miracle. The person is then officially recommended to the entire church for veneration (deep respect). The Saint is assigned a feast day and churches can be named after them.

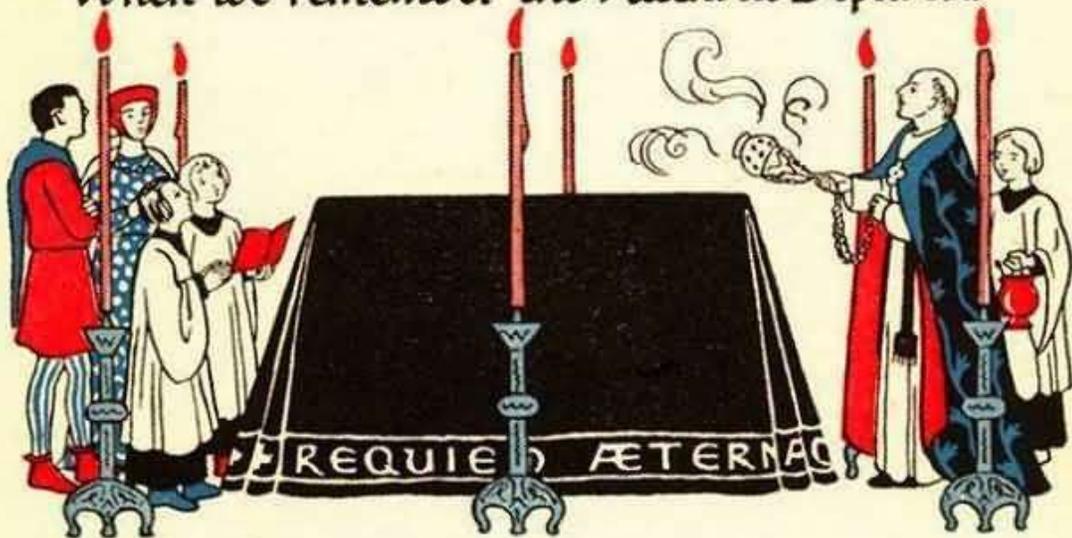
# NOVEMBER

1<sup>st</sup> ALL

SAINTS



2<sup>nd</sup> ALL SOULS' DAY  
When we remember the Faithful Departed





**The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Soul's Day)**

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021**

Jesus came into the world to reveal God's reign, yet some refused to believe in him. They did not understand that he was the fullness of God's revelation and the source of eternal salvation. They failed to comprehend the meaning of the miraculous sign of the bread that Jesus gave the people in the wilderness. He was the life-giving "bread" sent by God who would satisfy the people's hunger and thirst forever. Jesus did not reject anyone who came to him in faith. Just as he was careful not to lose a single fragment of the miraculous loaves, none of the souls God entrusted to him would perish; they would share in his resurrection.

For believers, life is changed at death, not ended. The souls of the just who lived the Paschal mystery of Christ's dying and rising share in his eternal life. All the faithful live in hope of enjoying the fullness of life with Jesus.

Today, we join with all our departed loved ones in their celebration of victory over death.

Historically, the custom of praying for the dead dates as far back as 2 Maccabees 12:42-46 in the Bible. The custom of setting apart a special day of intercession for the faithful departed was first established in 998, and it soon spread.

November 2 remains the liturgical celebration, the entire month of November is associated in the Catholic tradition with prayer for the departed. Lists of names of those to be remembered are placed near the altar on which the sacrifice of the mass is offered.

We pray especially at each Mass for those whose names are inscribed in the November Dead List.

### ALL SAINTS GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

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## **St Anthony Novena**



## **St ANTHONY NOVENA**

**Every Tuesday 12.15pm  
Start the Nine Tuesdays any Tuesday.**