

Today, the Church invites us to celebrate this solemn day when – as the collect prayer highlights – we wish to remember in a single celebration **all saints, and the holiness of all those who have embraced Jesus in their lives**, followed him as a Lord and Master and have tried to live through their entire lives in order to please Him and not mankind.

When we think of holiness, I believe that in the vast majority of the Christians what happens is an immediate feeling of breakup; and by this, I mean that our thoughts go at once to the great saints whom we honour and who were officially acknowledged by the Church, canonized, officially declared as such and became our model.

Well, in celebrating this festival today, we somewhat need to forget about them, these extraordinary people.

Indeed, we must think about the **essence of holiness**; because **these great saints** to whom we owe a lot, because of their actions, intercession, and especially their teachings, **were able to be what they were, because they understood what is the actual Christian life: being united to God and try to live in communion with God.**

The risk is that, once we think about these great virtues and to those great performers of miracles, without realizing it, we just concentrate on an ascetic-moral dimension and no more, and we tend to get depressed...

Because we think: how do we go about it?

We are not saints, after all! We are not Jesus! We are definitely not the Virgin Mary! What I often hear people say is....I'm just a poor Christian, one among many, an ordinary guy...

When we say that, what are we thinking of?

We think about our being brittle, which is indeed true. We are just poor creatures.

Yet, why is it that we never think that we are inhabited by God?

And, that God condescended to inhabit our hearts?

Holiness has a definite beginning: the day of our Christening.

That very day, we are given the chance to partake the life of Jesus, a seed of holiness.

Therefore, all of us have the right of calling ourselves saints; yet, we concurrently have the duty of bringing to a completion this extraordinary gift that God wanted to bestow upon all of mankind.

This is indeed the Christian Revelation. God does not look to misery, sins, frailty of all mankind, but to the chance that all have to convert and welcome God.

We have pointed it out also on Sunday, with Zacchaeus.

Also the first and second reading point out these truths.

BLESSED...

Homily, 1st November 2016 All Saints' Day

Mat 5,1-12

father G. Paparone o.p.

This immense multitude is here, and God wishes to bestow his holiness upon them. God says: *do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.* And, then once more anew: the angels say loudly that *salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*

Here is salvation, and holiness is a gift that God wishes to make to everyone. **We are the only ones who may prevent him to make this gift to all of us.**

We are the only ones who can determine the level of holiness, communion and acceptance of His words.

God is merciful and waits for us; He waits patiently for us as we are reminded in the Revelation.

And God wanted us all to be his sons and daughters.

St. John reminds us all of this in the first reading: *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! ... And that is what we are! and what we will be has not yet been made known.*

Contemporary exegetes have created a wonderful definition of holiness, salvation and the condition of Christians in the world and time: the condition of *already and not yet.*

Already: means that we have already put a foot in heaven, we already share holiness.

Not yet: because we are not completely citizens of heaven and fellow citizens of the saints.

Our Lord is waiting for us and this celebration should serve to urge us to take this alley, to take a decision, because it all depends upon us!

To make it even more clear, the Church today to celebrate holiness chose the *Beatitudes*, where no mention is made of either miracles or extraordinary events, but of a **new way of being in the world, of a different option.**

Do you understand?

In order to become saints, one needs to live, think, love, have different wishes, as indeed the Beatitudes highlight.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: it should not be so hard to become poor in spirit. All you need is to be rather humble, acknowledge one's own weaknesses, frailty and incapability.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness: this should similarly not be so hard; living in the world pursuing justice, truth and always choosing good and truth, although it may cost us.

Blessed are the meek: here too, it should not be hard and indeed, we know it is.

BLESSED...

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Yet, it is hard to the extent we do or do not want it, and then it is hard, until we beseech it as a gift from God.

I think we should all wonder: **what is the meaning of being Christian in time and history?**

What is the actual meaning for being all here tonight?

Celebrating the love of God for us and remind us that our actual home, our true venue, and our true target in life is not in this world, it is not immanent but rather transcendent!

And then, *forgetting what is behind* – says Saint Paul – *I press on toward the goal.*

In this Eucharist, like in all Eucharist, we shall have the chance to enter in communion with the Saint and be able to receive his holiness!

To be able to receive it, we must change our mindset: no longer superb, but humble, not filled with anger, but meek, not selfish, but merciful....

All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure

(1John 3,3)