

Solemnity of All Saints
St. Agnes Cathedral
Homily of Bishop Barres
November 1, 2023

Happy All Saints Day to one and all!

It is a great day to celebrate our baptismal call to heroic holiness and a Catholic missionary spirit!

We remember that “every saint is like a ray of light streaming forth from the Word of God.” (Pope Benedict, *Verbum Domini* 48)

We remember during this time of Eucharistic Revival in the United States that the saints are rays of light that stream from the Gloria, the Creed, and the Eucharistic Prayers of the Catholic Mass.

In the Book of Revelation, we see a powerful image of the Communion of Saints as they stand before the throne of the Lamb, wearing white robes, holding palm branches calling us to holiness, calling us to live the Beatitudes heroically and courageously.

Saints inspire us to have a burning desire for Heaven and Eternal life, a burning desire that lights their path and destiny on Earth.

In the 5th Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we hear Our Lord proclaim the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit...

Blessed are they who mourn...

Blessed are the meek...

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness...

Blessed are the merciful...

Blessed are the clean of heart...

Blessed are the peacemakers...

Blessed are those who are persecuted...

These Beatitudes are a portrait of Jesus Himself.¹

The Beatitudes inspire the Catholic saints of every century to humbly strive to live Jesus and spread the Kingdom of God.

Every saint's life is a ray of light streaming from the Beatitudes.

I would like to encourage all of us to study and pray Jesus in the lives, biographies, writings, charisms and ecclesial missions of the saints.

Think of the process of choosing your Confirmation saint's name.

If you are attracted by the holiness and virtue of a saint, that means the Holy Spirit is asking you to develop and express some of the virtues and qualities of that saint but through your own personality and your own moment in world and church history.

Let's review some groups of saints according to common themes to illustrate how the spirit of communion and mission of these saints help to inspire us to "holiness and mission" in our time:

Let's think of the great Biblical Saints who inspire us to be on fire with the Bible:

All the Old Testament saints and prophets

St Peter and St. Paul

¹ Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth (Volume 1)*, New York: Doubleday, 2007, 99. "We have seen that the Sermon on the Mount is a hidden Christology. Behind the Sermon on the Mount stands the figure of Christ, the man who is God, but who, precisely because he is God, descends, empties himself, all the way to death on the Cross. The saints from Paul though Francis of Assisi down to Mother Teresa, have lived out this option and have thereby shown us the correct image of man and his happiness."

The Evangelists Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

Let's think of the Saints that inspire young people:

Bl. Carlo Acutis

Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati (The Rich Young Man who said Yes to Jesus)

Bl. Frederic Ozanam

St. Katharine Drexel

Let's think of the great Saints of Catholic Education:

St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle

St. Joseph Calasanz

Blessed William Chaminade

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and all the great religious women pioneers of Catholic education in this country

Let's think of the great Married Saints whose Families transformed the World and History through the missionary spirit of Marriage and Family Life

Saints Louis and Zelig Martin (parents of St. Terese)

Saints Isidore the Farmer and Maria de la Cabeza

Blessed Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi

Let's think of the great Saints of Religious Life:

St. Francis

St. Benedict

St. Dominic

St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila

St. Ignatius of Loyola

Let's think of the great Saints of Intellectual Charity who help us to understand and articulate the Catholic emphasis on the unity and harmony of Faith and Reason:

St. Augustine

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. John Henry Cardinal Newman

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

Let's think of great Priest Saints, all Eucharistic Revivalists and Evangelizers. We ask their intercession for a rich new harvest of holy vocations to the priesthood:

Sts. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul

Sts. John Vianney and St. Pierre Julien Eymard

St. Philip Neri, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Ignatius Loyola

St. John Bosco

St. Padre Pio

St. John Henry Newman and St. John Neumann

Blessed Stanley Rother

Let's think of the great Saints of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy:

St. Francis of Assisi

St. Martin de Porres

St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac

St. Benedict Joseph Labre

St. Damien and St. Marianne Cope of Molokai

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Let's think of the Great Martyr Saints who teach us to witness to Catholic truth in the public square:

St. Agnes, the Patroness of our Diocese

St. Thomas More, the Patron of Statesmen and Politicians (we ask his intercession for all statesmen in the Middle East and Ukraine)

St. John Fisher

St. Maria Goretti

St. Oscar Romero

Blessed Miguel Pro

Let's think of the Great Pope Saints – all Rocks of the Church:

St. Pius X

St. John XXIII

St. Paul VI

Blessed John Paul I

St. John Paul II

Today, let's think of the great Saints of France.

We pray this morning here at St. Agnes Cathedral in Rockville Centre that as Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is rebuilt so too may the Catholic Church in France be rebuilt with the intercession of the great French Saints and our prayers. So many of them prayed in Notre Dame and were inspired in their ecclesial missions by their experience of the Art, Architecture, and Liturgy of Notre Dame.

We ask the intercession of: Saint Denis (3rd Century), St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), St. Louis IX (1214-1270), St. Joan of Arc (1412-1431), St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and St. Jane de Chantal (1572-1641), St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660) and St. Louise de Marillac (1591-1660), St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) and St. Claude de la Columbiere (1641-1682), St. Jean-

Baptiste de La Salle (1651-1719), St. Louis de Montfort (1673-1716), St. John Eudes (1601-1680), St. Benedict Joseph Labre (1748-1783), Blessed William Joseph Chaminade (1761-1850), St. Madeleine Sophie Barat (1779-1865), St. Jeanne Jugan (1792-1819), St. John Vianney (1786-1859) and St. Pierre Jean Eymard (1811-1868), Blessed Frederic Ozanam (1813-1853), St. Catherine Laboure (1806-1876), St. Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879), St. Terese of Lisieux (1873-1897), Sts. Louis and Zelig Martin (1823-1894) and St. Marie-Azelie Guerin (1831-1877), St. Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906), St. Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916) and many others, including the Mother of the Church, Our Lady of Paris.

We pray for all the souls of every century who have walked through, worshiped and prayed at Notre Dame Cathedral.

Let's think of the great Missionary Saints of the United States of America.

The great Catholic evangelization pioneers of this country were contemplative and swash-buckling missionary risk-takers.

St. Isaac Jogues (1607-1646) and Companions, St. Juniper Serra (1713-1784), St. John Neumann (1811-1860), Blessed Fr. Michael McGivney (1852-1890), Blessed Fr. Solanus Casey (1870-1957), Blessed Fr. Stanley Rother (1935-1981), St. Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini (1850-1917), St. Katherine Drexel (1858-1955), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), Blessed Sr. Miriam Teresa Demjanovich (1901-1927), St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853), Venerable Fr. Augustus Tolton² (1854-1897), Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979), Servant of God Sr. Thea Bowman (1937-1990) – the list of holy American Eucharistic missionaries goes on and on to the present day.

Finally, let's go to Mary, Our Lady, the Mother of the Church and the Queen of All Saints.

² See Michael R. Heinlein, Editor's *Black Catholics on the Road to Sainthood*, (Huntington Indiana, Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2021)

We ask Mary's intercession today that we may become the Catholic saints each of us is called to be – in our time, in our place, in our own unique circumstances of life.