

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

“You are indeed holy, O Lord, the fount of all holiness. Make holy these gifts we pray by sending down your Spirit upon them.” These words are taken from the beginning of Eucharistic Prayer II. In it the priest affirms the holiness of God. And then he asks God to make holy the gifts of bread and wine, and the gifts of our human minds and hearts. God can do this. God does do this. Only God can do this. God can make ordinary items holy by blessing them. God can make ordinary people holy by consecrating them. Actually, only God can make us holy. Also, the only way that you or I can become holy is if God offers his touch of holiness and if we accept it, if allow his holiness to enter into our lives, our minds, and our hearts. How do we do this?

Holiness. Ask yourself this question. Do I really know what holiness is? Do I know how to recognize holiness when I see it or encounter it? Ask yourself this question: Without ever having discussed with anyone or without ever making a public announcement about it, have you actually ruled out the possibility of yourself being a holy person? Ever? Do you think of being holy more as something that you would have to do? Or, do you see it as something that you allow God to do in you?

In the simple yet profound teaching known as The Beatitudes, Our Lord identifies several behaviors, attitudes, and mindsets that he says are actually blessed. Perhaps we should think of them as blessings in disguise. Being poor in spirit, when you are grieving for what has been lost, living humbly, wanting to be a truly good person, acting mercifully to those who hurt you, striving for motives and intentions that are pure and not self-serving, working to establish peace, allowing yourself to be criticized for trying to do the right thing. Christ calls each of these attitudes and efforts blessed. Not in and of themselves. Jesus is saying that his Father blesses us especially when we are trying to live like this.

And that blessing is part of what makes us holy. Even though, when we are mourning or struggling to make peace, we do not feel holy. But just stay with these beatitudes for a few minutes. Notice. In each one there is some diminishment. In each one there is something missing. In each one there is something yearned for or desired. Why does the Father bless these particular attitudes of heart? Because God sees that in living this way we are on the right path, we are on the way, we are opening ourselves to God’s grace. We are not far from the kingdom of God.

Saint Thomas Aquinas was asked what it took to be a saint. He responded by saying that to be a saint is to do the will of the Father. **To be a saint is to will the good of the other person.** To be a saint then is to love each person we encounter in such a way that we will the good for them or want the good for them. The good is not fully present in them yet. But we will it to be so. There is a diminishment in each person. That is what Jesus pointed out in the Beatitudes. The saint recognizes this, yearns and acts in such a way that he or she wills the good of the other.

What we often do not remember or lose sight of is this: God is constantly seeking ways to bless us, consecrate us, and make us holy. It is God who wants us to be saints even more than we do. Even our names are saints' names. Our patron saints. Sunday afternoon at the Spanish language Mass there are three members of our faith community who have never received the Sacrament of Confirmation. For a long time, they have wanted to be confirmed. Because of the Corona-virus the Archbishop has allowed his pastors to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to these parishioners. It is another way that God seeks to bless--with the gift, the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Each will take an additional name: Catalina, Therese, Teresa. Each saint they will embrace in this moment of new consecration and confirmation. They will ask their assistance to help them to live a holy life. To be an inspiration for them and a source of encouragement to live a holy life. My friends, Our Lord wants us to be holy. His Father acts to make us holy. The Holy Spirit abides to prompt us to put on the mindset of Christ. Today is the feast of All Saints. But I assure you it is not just about them—the saints in the Heavenly Hall of Fame. It is much more about us. You and Me. And reminding us that it is the Lord who wants us to be holy, believes we can be holy and graces us with his holiness. Let us stand up for what the Lord wants us to be and open ourselves to his grace.

May the Lord bless us today and give us his peace.