

## *All Saints 2015*

Throughout the year, we celebrate the feasts of many saints. We celebrate the feasts of saints such as St. Francis, St. Dominic, St. Catherine, St. Theresa, and so many more. But today, on this beautiful feast we call *All Saints Day*, we celebrate the feast of a vast army of saints whose names we do not know. We celebrate the feasts of those women and men, ordinary people like ourselves, who now live in God's presence because they once lived in God's holiness. We celebrate the feast of people like ourselves, people who lived their lives in Christ and so now live in God's presence.

I have always been encouraged by this feast of All Saints because it reminds me that holiness is not for the few; it is for all of us. Holiness is the way God intends us to live; it is our vocation. Each one of us, without exception, has been called to be holy so that we can live now and forever in the presence of God who is holy.

St. Paul begins his letters by identifying the people to whom he writes as the saints, or the holy ones of God. For example, he begins his first letter to the Corinthians: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by will of God .... to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified, called to be holy ...". Notice what the great apostle says. First, we have been sanctified by God. Second, we have been called to be holy; we have been called to be saints.

What Paul is saying is this. We have been sanctified and made holy by the blood of Jesus Christ. We are already saints, not because of something we have done but because of what God has done for us in Christ. Second, since God has already made us holy we are called to live as the saints, the holy ones, whom God has made holy.

You see, whether we know it or not, whether we accept it or not, God has already made us holy. We were sanctified in Christ at our baptism. The saints we celebrate today are the men and women who lived the gift of holiness that was given to them at their baptism. They are that vast multitude of people in today's first reading who stand before the Lamb of God and sing, "Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, power and might be to our God." They are the poor in spirit; they are those who mourned; they are the meek; they are those who hungered and thirsted to do the will of God's. They are you and me, provided we persevere in holiness. St. John tells us in today's second reading that we are already God's children, but what we shall be has not yet been revealed. When it is revealed, however, we will be like Christ, and we shall see God face to face.

We are saints already not because of something we have done but because of what God has done for us in Christ. Our vocation is to put into practice the holiness God has given us in Christ. The goal and purpose of our life is to be holy. The goal and purpose of our life is to join this vast multitude of saints who praise God. This is why I love this feast of All Saints, It reminds me of who we truly—God's beloved and holy children.