

Canonization, the legal process for becoming a saint, whereby it acknowledges that someone is already in heaven doing holy works on our behalf. And yet there are billions we don't even know about who are with the Lord in glory. We honor all of them today! This feast in honor of all the saints calls to mind some important truths.

The first is that there are many, many saints. The reading from the Book of Revelation speaks about the 144,000 who survived the great trial of persecution, distress and, we can add, the trials of life.

144,000 is a Jewish way of saying a huge number. Holiness is not as rare as we might think. The lives of the saints teach us that holiness comes in all sizes and shapes: rich (King Stephan of Hungary) and poor (peasant farmer St. Isidore), warriors (Joan of Arc) and peacemakers, (Catherine of Siena) hermits (Anthony the Great) and organizers of charities (St. Vincent DePaul), parents (the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux) and scholars (St Thomas Aquinas) and those who couldn't read, but could read souls. And there were also some grumpy ones – like St Jerome!

A 2nd truth: Every continent, every nation, every era has its saints as does ours. The struggles may change; the heroes are still among us. In some ages, the heroes stood for doctrinal truth; today, they stand for the sanctity of life; some stood for justice (like recently canonized, Oscar Romero) and others for charity.

*Every generation has its own struggle and its own heroes. Whatever situation of every generation, God continued to call forth saints.

JPII – and the fall of communism.

Today, God will call forth saints to lead the Church from the darkness of scandals.

But for all of them, whatever the divide, God will send forward His saints.

The Beatitudes teach us a third truth. Here, the Lord identifies various kinds of experience such as showing mercy, undergoing persecution, sorrow, knowing our spiritual poverty and how all of these, each of these, can be a place of grace.

The lives of the saints teach us the roads to Christ's glory and spiritual strength are many. Things the world considers negative and to be avoided can be places full of grace for us, a place to grow strong in Christ: a difficult job, a trying marriage, debilitating illness, lonely old age — saints are found in all of these and became saints through all of these.

People are not holy in spite of difficult circumstances, but through them. It is as though difficulties open us up to the grace of Christ because only when we know we are powerless can we be filled with Christ's power. There are many roads to holiness.

Finally, the Letter of John says that the glory of the faithful Christian is not apparent to our world because it is on the inside. It will be obvious when everything comes to light. John tells us that Holiness is not visible on the outside, like a halo, but is within.

Which is true, but it does begin to show on the outside. One might meet someone who is physically ugly to the world, but through their holiness, they become beautiful to us.

The saints are our intercessors, helpers in prayer, partners, and patrons. They can help us be heroic and faithful in our life.

They let the light of Christ shine through them in their time; they can help us do the same.

Then maybe someday, we will be among that 144,000 who survived the trial and are in glory.

All Saints Day teaches us that, by the grace of Christ, there have been many, many heroic holy ones in the past and, by the same grace of Christ, there will be many, many more — and we can be among them!

