



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

BENEDICT XVI

ANGELUS

St Peter's Square

Thursday, 1 November 2007

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On today's Solemnity of All Saints, our hearts are dilated to the dimensions of Heaven, exceeding the limits of time and space. At the beginning of Christianity, the members of the Church were also called "saints". In his First Letter to the Corinthians, St Paul addresses "those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor 1: 2). Indeed, Christians are *already* saints because Baptism unites them to Jesus and to his Paschal Mystery, but at the same time they must *become so* by conforming themselves every more closely to him. Sometimes, people think that holiness is a privileged condition reserved for the few elect. Actually, becoming holy is every Christian's task, indeed, we could say, every person's! The Apostle writes that God has always blessed us and has chosen us in Christ "that we should be holy and blameless before him... in love" (Eph 1: 3-5). All human beings are therefore called to holiness, which ultimately consists in living as children of God, in that "likeness" with him in accordance with which they were created. All human beings *are* children of God and all must *become* what they are by means of the demanding process of freedom. God invites everyone to belong to his holy people. The "Way" is Christ, the Son, the Holy One of God: "no one comes to the Father but by me [Jesus]" (cf. Jn 14: 6).

The Church has wisely placed in close succession the Feast of All Saints and All Souls' Day. Our prayer of praise to God and veneration of the blessed spirits which today's liturgy presents to us as "a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" (Rv 7: 9), is united with prayers of suffrage for all who have preceded us in passing from this world to eternal life. Tomorrow, we shall be dedicating our prayers to them in a special way and we will celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice for them. To tell the truth, the Church invites us to

pray for them every day, also offering our daily sufferings and efforts so that, completely purified, they may be admitted to the eternal joy of light and peace in the Lord.

The Virgin Mary is resplendent at the centre of the Assembly of Saints, "created beings all in lowliness surpassing, as in height, above them all" (Dante, *Paradise*, Canto XXXIII, 2).

By putting our hand in hers, we feel encouraged to walk more enthusiastically on the path of holiness. Let us entrust to her our daily work and pray to her today for our dear departed, in the intimate hope of meeting one another all together one day in the glorious Communion of Saints.

After the Angelus:

I greet all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present at today's Angelus. The Solemnity of All Saints calls us to deepen our communion with the great figures of the Church who radiate the splendour of God's kingdom of truth and love. May we strive to imitate their heroic virtues and follow their example along the path of perfection. I wish you and your families a happy feast day.

May God bless you all!

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