November 1st: Solemnity of All Saints

Gospel text (*Mt* 5:1-12a): When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

"Rejoice and be glad"

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Today, we celebrate the reality of the Mystery of Salvation. A reality that we evince in the “Creed” and which is very comforting: “I believe in the communion of saints.” All saints, who have already passed from death into eternal life, from the Virgin Mary on, form a unity; they represent the Church of the Blessed, whom Jesus congratulates: “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God” (Mt 5:8). At the same time, they join us in communion, too. Because the saints already enjoy the eternal vision of God, they cannot be united to us through faith and hope; but, they can, instead, be united to us through charity. “So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (1Cor 13:13). Charity understood as that kind of love that links us, through them, to the same Father, to the very same Christ Redeemer and to the same Holy Spirit; the kind of love that makes them supportive and solicitous with us. Therefore, it is not that we venerate the saints only because of their exemplarity. There is a stronger reason than that: to be united in Spirit with the whole Church invigorated by the practice of the fraternal charity.

Because of this deep and profound unity we must feel close to all those saints that, before us, have believed what we now believe, have waited for what we are now waiting for and, mostly, have loved God Father and their brothers, also seeking the imitation of Christ's love.

The saint apostles, the saint martyrs, the saint confessors, who have lived through history are, therefore,

our brothers and our intercessors; on them, these prophetical words of Jesus have been fulfilled: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.” (Mt 5:11-12). The treasures of their sanctity are like family assets, which we can rely upon. These are the treasures in heaven, which Jesus invites us to store up (cf. Mt 6:20). As the Vatican Council II asserts, “Thus by their brotherly interest our weakness is greatly strengthened.” (Lumen gentium, 49). This solemnity brings some comforting news, which invites us to joyous festivities and celebrations.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Divinity is purity, it is liberation from the passions and the removal of every evil: if all these things are in you, God is truly in you" (Saint Gregory of Nyssa)

- "We are not alone; we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses: with them we form the Body of Christ" (Benedict XVI)

- "The sixth beatitude proclaims, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt 5:8). "Pure in heart" refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity; chastity or sexual rectitude; love of truth and orthodoxy of faith. There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2518)