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“I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue” (Rev 7:9).

Solemnity of All Saints

Rev 7:2-4, 9-14; Ps 24; John 3:1-3; Matt 5:1-12a

Today's solemnity is a joyful reminder of the collective nature of our call to holiness. We are in this together, riding toward eternity on the coattails of those who have gone before us and offering our own lives to the next generation as encouragement that if sinners like us can be saints, they can surely follow. Our beloved dead, remembered tomorrow on the feast of All Souls, assure us that love is stronger than death because God is Love itself.

Hebrews 12:1 depicts this mystery as the “great cloud of witnesses” that cheers us on from just beyond the veil. We are hardly the first or the only ones to have made the journey. Humanity on this planet is estimated at some 113 billion people evolving toward our current population of 8 billion. That is a lot of experience and wisdom poured into the human narrative thus far, if we can learn from it.

Faith tells us that Jesus' role in human history has been decisive on our behalf. His Incarnation showed the full beauty of a human being created in the image and likeness of God before sin distorted its imprint. His redemptive death restored that image and revealed our divine destiny with God. The risen Christ now animates humanity toward that omega point, the New Creation already visible in the saints. “Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the

children of God. Yet so we are" (1 John 3:1).

The Beatitudes reveal us on the way to this final wholeness. Like space pilgrims on a trajectory toward God, the "attitude" of our progress is to lean into the unfinished future, living the promise that is both now and not yet. "We are the people that longs to see your face" (Ps 24). Poverty of spirit, purity of heart, hunger and thirst for justice, meekness, peacemaking, even holy sorrow and persecution mark the saints. Every advance in consciousness and courage by a few influences all of humanity. Jesus, pioneer and first of many brothers and sisters, set in motion new possibilities for human holiness.

Because of Jesus, grace is at work in human nature, bringing us closer to God and to what we really are: "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Transformation in Christ is the heart of all Christian formation. By baptism we have been incorporated into the pattern of his death and resurrection. How much more exciting this kind of shared holiness is compared to our own lonely path of sacrifice and good works to somehow please God, who already loves us more than we can imagine.

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