



## ALL SAINTS' DAY HOMILY

Fr. Ambrose Bennett

On this feast of All Saints, we honor that countless multitude of holy men and women who now behold God face to face in the beatific vision, our brothers and sisters redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, who have gone before us. We honor not only those who have been canonized and whose names appear in the liturgical calendar but also the saints whose names are known only to a few or perhaps now to God alone but who have now received the victor's crown in heaven.

Now many Catholics, living surrounded by the Protestant majority, seem to have become a bit bashful and reticent in proclaiming the fullness of our belief in the communion of saints. When our non-Catholic friends and neighbors criticize our invocation of the saints, many Catholics get tongue-tied and are unsure how to respond. Sorry to say, some are shaken in their faith and even begin to wonder if the Protestant criticisms are valid in saying that the veneration of the saints detracts from Christ as our one Mediator and Savior. In opposing the invocation of saints, many will quote St. Paul's words in 1 Tm 2.5: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all" (1 Tm 2.5-6).

But the context of this statement makes all the difference. Just before, St. Paul says,

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tm 2.1-4).

Now this tells us that our own intercessory prayer, offered through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, is itself a participation in his own heavenly and high-priestly intercession before the Father in heaven.

St. Paul also tells us in the Epistle to the Romans that nothing, not even death, can ever separate us from our Savior:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm 8.35; 37-39).



## SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



For the things that abide are faith, hope, and charity. The saints in heaven no longer walk by faith and hope, as we must in this life; but their charity, their love of God and of us, is not lessened by their entrance into heavenly glory. Rather that charity is brought to perfection in their union with God in Christ their Savior. Though they experience the fullness of joy, the saints in heaven are still mindful of us, for they are still members of Christ's mystical body. Even more than we, they are aware that "the body [of Christ] is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body" (1 Co 12.12).

In the Apocalypse of St. John, we read that that prayers of the saints are offered by the angels in golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5.8): the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar before the throne (Rev. 8.3).

The veneration of the saints and our invocation of their intercession is, from beginning to end, a participation in Christ's mediation and a testimony to our faith that our communion in Christ—and therefore the efficacy of intercessory prayer—transcends even death itself, in the Risen Savior.