

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Let us all rejoice in the Lord, as we celebrate the feast day in honour of all the Saints, at whose festival the Angels rejoice and praise the Son of God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 23)

ANTIPHON: Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

RESPONSE: Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

LECTOR: The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm. **R.**

LECTOR: Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. **R.**

LECTOR: He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him.

Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest, says the Lord. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

TODAY'S READINGS Rev 7: 2-4, 9-14; 1 Jn 3: 1-3; Mt 5: 1-12

NEXT WEEK (32nd Sunday Year B) Wis 6: 12-16; 1 Thes 4: 13-18; Mt 25: 1-13

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Saints are the winners



1 November 2020 All Saints Year A

Imagine you're a participant on a Catholic game show. The host flashes a smile.

"This is for the win—no pressure. The final question is ..." The host pauses for dramatic effect and says, "Are ... you ... ready?"

You swallow nervously, hardly believing that you have reached this point because of all those Sunday homilies and years of Catholic schooling. You are one question away from winning. You clench your teeth and nod.

The host says, "The question ... what is a saint?"

You have two minutes to answer. The answer appears simple. "A saint is a holy person and holiness is what God has by nature and what the creature has by participation, by grace."

That's a good start. Extra points for the clarifying distinction between nature and grace. But there's still 1:51 left on the clock. The word saint derives from the Latin sanctus, which means 'holy'. The verb form is sancire, meaning 'to consecrate' or 'to sanctify'. The English of the verb could be 'to saint-ify'. The bread and wine is 'saint-ified'—set apart for a holy use, for administering, becoming a vessel for the divine presence.

A saint is someone who, manifest in their words and actions, has become a vessel of the divine presence in the world. This is going very well but there's something missing in your answer: you better turn to

the bible. Vatican II said somewhere that scripture is "the soul of theology..."

God is called "holy, holy, holy" by the flying seraphim in Isaiah 6 and "the Holy One of Israel" in lots of places (Psalms 71, 78, 89, for example). Not only God, though: Psalm 89 is one place where heavenly beings are called "the assembly of the holy ones ... the council of the holy ones." And in Deuteronomy 33, Moses, blessing Israel before his death, gave them the same title, God's "holy ones." So God, the heavenly beings privy to his inner council, and God's chosen people are all "holy ones." Throughout the New Testament, Jesus's people are called hagioi, "holy ones" or "saints," as it is usually translated in our bibles. That means the baptised, all of us.

A few seconds left! With a flash of insight, you speak up again: "We call 'saint' someone who has realised what is deepest in their humanity, their 'likeness' to God; like angels they have been granted privileged place in God's ruling council. That's why we can pray to them. Saints have been set apart to become a vessel of God's presence, to administer his rule over all things. That makes sense of the miracles! And we are all called saints because that is our calling and destiny in Jesus."

The host clears his throat and smiles.

W. Chris Hackett
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