

The Sunday of All Saints  
Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. (KJV)

We gather in God's Holy Church today to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. We hear the message of the Holy Gospel. We have the opportunity to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

We are Serbian Orthodox Christians. At Baptism we confessed Jesus Christ as King and as God. On Friday, Vidovdan, we remembered St. Lazarus, the martyrs of Kosovo and all those having lost their lives in defense of the faith.

Today on this first Sunday after Pentecost we remember all the saints and martyrs. We have benefitted beyond measure from the saints and martyrs through the centuries.

Our lives are enriched and shaped by the faith of the saints and martyrs through the centuries. The Divine services throughout the years incorporate the saints and martyrs in the Church's liturgical life.

The lives of the saints and martyrs are included in the history books of the Church. They are depicted in the iconography and frescoes. Hymns and liturgical texts reference and are written in honor of the saints and martyrs.

Today's Gospel emphasizes the importance of taking up our personal crosses and following Jesus Christ. We learn how to take up our crosses and follow Jesus Christ by steadfastly attending the church services and heeding the Gospel.

We learn about Jesus Christ by being attentive to the content of the Divine services and teachings of the Church. Our lives are enriched when we read the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the saints and martyrs.

The lessons of the lives of the saints and martyrs have endured through the centuries. The fallen world's heroes are not anchored and centered in the Lord Jesus Christ, Worldly heroes come and go. Worldly heroes are soon forgotten.

Saints and martyrs withstand the test of time. They shine the light of Jesus Christ through their lives. Each of us decides who to follow, to look up to, and admire. We each decide whose lives we will study to learn life's lessons.

Wisdom prevails in turning to the lives of the saints and martyrs. Jesus Christ exists in and shines through the lives of the saints and martyrs. Lasting lessons for life exist in the lives of the saints and martyrs.

The lives of the saints and martyrs teach us how to deal with life's problems and challenges. The Church has preserved the lessons and teachings of the saints and martyrs down through the centuries.

We know from the Scriptures that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb.13:8) The saints and martyrs realized Jesus Christ's Divinity and certainty. The saints and martyrs embraced Jesus Christ completely.

Believers have the opportunity each day to conform to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Constant repentance and embracing Jesus Christ are possible for each person.

The saints and martyrs conclusively prove that repentance and change are possible for anyone willing to embrace and follow Jesus Christ. Hardened criminals and flagrant sinners have become saints.

Today believers hear about the saints and martyrs of the Church. Now is the time to forsake ways of life that have nothing to do with Jesus Christ. Embracing Jesus Christ requires a conscious desire to fill the heart, mind and soul with Christ.

Love for Jesus Christ is the most secure investment in the Kingdom of God. Love for each other and forgiveness in personal life facilitate the journey to God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

Parishes go through changes during the years. Believers are expected to mature in Jesus Christ as they go through the life-cycle. Jesus Christ is ever-ready to lead believers from the Baptismal font to God's Heavenly Kingdom.

The saints and martyrs have defined and opened the path to travel to God's Kingdom and eternal life. Wise believers garner strength from the lives of the saints and martyrs. Wise believers follow the path of the saints and martyrs.

Parents do well to use the saints and martyrs as examples of soul-enriching heroes for their sons and daughters. Families benefit from praying to and honoring their patron saints in their homes on a consistent basis.

Parish churches normally honor the saint or martyr for which they are named. The patron saint or martyr of the parish church is a soul enriching and protecting resource for the parishioners during their entire lives.

Thank God for the saints and martyrs through the centuries. Thank God for the Church preserving the knowledge about the lives of the saints and martyrs. Today is a day of great joy in God's Holy Church as we celebrate the saints and martyrs.

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The Sunday of All Saints. Holy Martyrs Manuel, Sabel and Ismael. June 17/30.  
2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic