

ALL SAINTS DAY

Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12

HOMILY

WHO IS A SAINT?

Today we celebrate this great feast of All Saints. It is important to emphasise what we mean here by 'saints'. Many of us have strange notions of what a saint looks like. For sure, saints are not the opposite of sinners. To be a saint does not mean "sinless." No one and no saint has so good that they haven't failed at some point, Saints are not at all people who broken no the rules. Think of Augustine? In a way we can say that saints are saved sinners. We also tend to think that saints are people who never had a sense of humour? What comes to mind is what St Tereza of Avila said ('God save us from sullen Saints'). The saints therefore were fully human. They struggled with temptation; they savoured life's joy.

On All Saint's day we think of all the good people who have crossed our path and enriched our lives: parents, classmates, parishioners here at St Joseph's parish. They were not perfect, but they were in their own way great human beings.

A priest once asked the class: what do you have to do to become a saint? One hand shot up: '*You have to die, Father*' said the little boy. In a sense of course he was right. But I think that we all know many living saints who are truly living with the spirit of Christ and are on the way to eternal union with him.

Today's feast is first of all an occasion for great thanksgiving. It is altogether reasonable to think that many of our family, relatives and friends who have gone before us are being celebrated today

While we celebrate the good people that have gone before us let us remember one thing: 'Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future.'