

Solemnity of All Saints B/2015

Today, I want to share with you some thoughts I wrote ten years ago on the Solemnity of All Saints. I want in particular to start from human experience, because in it, you and I can find a common ground and common language that can enlighten the struggles of our daily life.

In fact, in each of us there is a deep desire to be happy, a yearning for joy, an aspiration to be well in our body, prosperous in our family and successful in our job and undertakings. In truth, none of us wishes misfortune for himself or herself. To sustain the contrary would be a cheap lie.

When some people evaluate their life, they easily say that God has blessed them in many ways in their careers and in their children, in their health and in their relationships. In fact, what they want to say this way is to witness to the truth that their desires and aspirations have been met, that they are happy in their life.

However, we know by experience that even if human aspirations and desires can be met, it does not, nevertheless, prevent us, from time to time, to experience dissatisfaction, frustrations or disappointments. Those are things which happen to us when there is a health problem, a failure in marriage, a loss of job, a difficult relationship or an obstacle in the fulfillment of our projects of life. Such experiences of shortage teach us that as long as we are still on earth our happiness will never be totally complete and perfect.

In that context, the celebration of All Saints reminds us that the unsatisfied aspirations of human life will one day find a happy ending in God. All our struggles and battles, all the obstacles and failures of our life will be overcome. God will give a definitive solution to all our problems; he will bring about salvation to all those who will be able to fight and remain faithful to him.

In fact, those who are rewarded, as we heard in the first reading, are not lazy people or those who have spent their life running away from the battlefield of this life, but those who have fought and survived the time of distress. They fought until they shared their blood, but as they got into a scrap with evil for Jesus Christ' sake, the Lamb has washed their robes and made them white in his own blood. Those who are promised to such an honor of standing in front of the throne of the Lamb of God are people of every nation, race, tongue and color.

That is why we are not alone in our procession toward the throne of the Lamb. We are not alone in the battle in which we are engaged for the sake of Jesus Christ and his kingdom. A countless number of people throughout the whole world are committed to the same cause as we are.

Today in an anticipative way is unfolded before us the truth of what we will become at the end of life, namely to see God face to face. That day it will be obvious that we are children of God, that we did not believe in vain. Today is revealed before the face of the earth what the fate of all the Christians will be, namely that God is their Father and they deserve to live in his house for eternity.

Everyone having this hope and longing to see him should make himself pure, keeping himself from all that destroys God's life in him. It is only on that condition that the

happiness God has prepared for us from all eternity will be ours. At that time, as we will be like him, we will see him as he is.

The happiness to which we are called is not just something to come, it is an outcome of a process we have already started right now. It is the end of a journey we have already started here on earth by our acceptance of Jesus Christ and our obedience to his word. Any time we strive for spiritual poverty, we are building up the kingdom of heaven where God will enrich all those who put their earthly success at the feet of the Lamb. Any time we mourn for the cause of God, we are sure that we will be comforted, because our God is the one who will wipe away every tear from the face of his beloved ones.

Any time we work on ourselves and on our character in order to become meek, gentle and kind, we are preparing our heritage, because only those who are pure will be close to God. Any time, we spend our energy to work for justice and peace between families, peoples and nations, we are building up God's kingdom, because every true longing for good is God's gift. Any time that, forgetting the hurts and the wounds, we forgive the wrong deeds done to us, we prepare God's blessing upon us, for only those who are merciful will receive God's mercy.

The feast of All Saints is the celebration of all those who have tried hard every day and in every action to live the Gospel by loving God and their brothers and sisters. The feast of All Saints is not the celebration of heroes, but that of ordinary people, like you and me, who have overcome the difficulties of life by their fidelity to God and to their brothers and sisters.

The saints are our models to imitate. They remind us that every pain we accept in the name of the Lord Jesus will be rewarded. They remind us also that only those who persevere in their faith in spite of hardships and difficulties of life will receive their recompense. The saints come from all the horizons of life. Among them are priests, religious, lay people, fathers and mothers of families, single people and married people, children, young and adults, canonized and not canonized, etc. They are all in the presence of the throne of the Lamb of God, praising him and contemplating his face, day and night. They intercede for us before the throne of the Lamb of God. They are the invisible part of the Church as we are the visible one.

To become a saint is our vocation and our duty. To celebrate all saints is to remind us of our duty as Christians and our vocation as disciples of Jesus. Let us ask them to help us to be faithful to the promises of our baptism. May God bless you all!

Revelations 7: 2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3: 1-3; Mathew 5: 1-12a



Homily Date: November 01, 2015
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Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20151101homily.pdf