

SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

*THE EIGHTFOOLD PATH TO SALVATION

1. The Eightfold Path to Beatitude (Happiness): Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount that there is an eightfold path to happiness or blessedness. If we want to be happy, we need to seek spiritual poverty instead of riches, offer up our suffering instead of seeking disordered pleasure, grow in meekness and humility instead of pride, seek righteousness instead of earthly honors, be merciful instead of envious, be pure of heart instead of duplicitous, be a peacemaker instead of a divider, and accept persecution due to our faith in Christ. This path to true happiness is a paradox. We do not normally think that those who mourn or those who are persecuted are happy and blessed. The world wants us to accept a great lie and equate happiness with amassing wealth, wielding power, and pursuing pleasure. Jesus, by contrast, wants us to see how humility, docility to the Spirit, trust in the Father's care, justice, peace, purity, and mercy are the hallmarks of true happiness. Today, the Church invites us to contemplate the saints as models of those who followed Jesus' eightfold path to happiness. We need to learn how we, with our unique personalities and lives, are called to the same holiness.
2. Salvation comes from our God and the Lamb: The Second Reading, from the Book of Revelation, is a reminder that our salvation and blessedness are not something we achieve through our efforts alone. Salvation is, first of all and above all, a divine gift. This means that it is initially unmerited. In fact, we did nothing to earn the grace we received in Baptism. Revelation 7:3 references how we have been sealed by God and protected from evil through Baptism. The waters of Baptism are how we become members of God's people and how we are adopted into God's family as his sons and daughters (Barber, Coming Soon, 107). When John, the author of the Book of Revelation, contemplates those who have been saved and dwell with God in the blessedness of heaven, he first sees 144,000. This number symbolizes a righteous remnant from the 12 tribes of Israel who have been saved. John then sees a great innumerable multitude from the Gentile nations. The saints from the 12 tribes and those from the Gentiles carry palm branches because they are celebrating their admittance into the heavenly Temple (Barber, Coming Soon, 112). They wear white robes because they have been delivered from the great tribulation.
3. We are God's Children Now: The First Letter of John contemplates the great mystery of our divine adoption. Through our Baptism, we are now God's children. This is an awesome gift, and yet something greater awaits us at the end of our earthly lives.

Here, on earth, we walk by faith and often stumble as we walk along the eightfold path of the beatitudes. In heaven, our faith in God will give way to the vision of God: “for we shall see him as he is.” Here, on earth, we are drawn toward God by our hope in his promises. Not only do we hope in the promise of eternal life, but also in the promise that God will give us, through his Son, what we need to attain eternal life.

**Homily from the ePriest.com Daily Reflection.*