

27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

St. Matthew 21:33-43

The material world reveals something of the spiritual world. When God created the earth and all living things, He bestowed upon them something of Himself so that in the natural world we behold the supernatural. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ means that the spiritual and the material are not separate but united and just as both were corrupted by the sin of Adam, so both have been redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ. Human beings are themselves not only body or only soul but are both in what we call the hylomorphic union. What we do in the body affects the soul and what happens in the soul is expressed in the body.

The Church has always expressed the divine in the material in things such as architecture and in art so that what we behold in divine worship on earth orients us towards divine worship in heaven. So it is with the Saints—for in their earthly life we see expressed the divine grace of God. They elicit in us a response, they demand simply by the example of their lives that we confront our lives.

St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, was once a soldier who longed for the glory of battle and war until he was struck in the leg with a canon-ball and forced to lay in hospital whilst he recovered. It was then that he first read the lives of the Saints, in particular, the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic. In those images of the Saints and in the pages that told of their lives he saw men and women who were as ordinary as he was but who lived extraordinary lives.

Pope Benedict XVI called the Saints the living proof of the reality and transforming power of Christ. He said: “[I]f we look at the Saints, this great luminous trail on which God passed through history, we see that there truly is a

force of good which resists the millennia; there truly is the light of light.” The Saints are an expression of the divine Gospel in earthly lives, they are for us a reminder that our Faith matters, that the Church matters, that God matters—for if these did not then their lives were wasted in grace as our lives are wasted in sin.

The Saints are men and women who responded to the circumstances of their lives with heroic virtue. They recognised that freedom does not lie in the will to do whatever we please but in the will to do whatever pleases God; that in the battle between doing what is right and doing what is popular is the great cosmic battle fought out in the life of Christ.

The Saints did not possess greater powers than we do, nor did they have easier access to God than us, for they lived as we live, they struggled as we struggle, they sinned as we sin, but they responded to all of this by seeking above all else the grace of God in the Mass and in the Sacraments. If the Saints can be said to have had extraordinary powers then it is only because they co-operated with the grace God freely grants to each of us. It is the grace of God that is granted to us His chosen people that means He can say through the prophet Isaiah: “What could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?” (Is. 5:4).

Our duty is to become Saints. That is why we are here. The meaning of life is communion with God. But to become a Saint is easier said than done. But how do we start? The very first step is to at least have the desire to want to live a life of holiness. Without this desire, there is no point. But what do we do? I am going to give you five things where you can start. First, attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass every week. Second, pray the Rosary (or at least one decade of the Rosary) every day. Third, make your confession every month. Fourth, take a few minutes each day to read the Holy Bible. Fifth, take a few minutes as well to read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* or something from the lives of the Saints or some other devotional book. Do these and you’ll have begun the work

God wants of you, which is the salvation of your soul. To do these things, at least the Rosary, the Bible and the *Catechism* could take no more than half-an-hour of your day, and that time must surely be worth giving to gain eternity.

So now the only thing that remains for us then is the question, "Do I want to be a Saint?"