

Proper Prayers of the Mass
Feast of All Saints
Provided Courtesy of Una Voce Orange County

which day Pope Gregory IV had in 835 fixed the commemoration of all the Saints, previously celebrated on different days in different places. All Saints Day therefore commemorates Christ's triumph over the false gods of the pagans, and the original dedication of the church accounts for the use in the Mass, on the feast as well as on the Vigil, of many texts from the liturgy of the martyrs.

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The Epistle puts before us St. John's vision of heaven, the twelve thousand (twelve is a symbolic number signifying fullness) from every tribe of Israel and the numberless host from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, standing before the throne and the Lamb, clad in white robes, with palms in their hands. Christ, our Lady and the nine choirs of angels, the apostles and prophets, the martyrs in the crimson of their blood, the white-robed confessors and the choirs of chaste virgins form the majestic throng (*Vespers hymn*). All are there who here below followed Christ's teaching: the poor in spirit, the meek, the afflicted, those who hungered and thirsted after justice, the merciful, the clean of heart, peacemakers, those who suffered persecution for Christ; to all these Christ said: Rejoice, for a rich reward awaits you in heaven (*Gospel, Communion*). Among these millions who served Christ faithfully on earth are some who were close to us, our relations and friends, our brethren in our parochial family; now they share in the glory of "the Lord, the King of kings, the Crown of all the Saints". At Mass everything recalls this heavenly homeland and we enter into communion with it: in the *Preface* we join in praise with the Angels; in the *Communicantes* we join in prayer with the Saints; our altar, where the Lamb of God is offered, is one with the heavenly altar where the Lamb stands "upright, yet slain ... in sacrifice"; it is the same priest, Christ, who offers himself unseen thereon and visibly in heaven.

In ancient times a King's servants and soldiers were known by his device, which he used too as a seal. Here the angels mark the elect with God's seal to show that they belong to him. The 144,000 perhaps represent the convert Jews, the "great multitude" the convert Gentiles. Angels and men join together in worshipping God and Christ.

The Sermon on the Mount is as famous as the Ten Commandments. The eight beatitudes state the qualities necessary for membership of the Messiah's kingdom on earth and in heaven.

Commentary From St. Andrew Daily Missal, 1952 ed.



The Church Triumphant, Militant, Suffering.