

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

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[1] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. IV, pg. 264

[2] The Penny Catechism

[3] Gabriel, Divine Intimacy vol. IV, pg. 264

[4] Pope Benedict XVI Holy Thursday, 5 April 2012

Quick Connect

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What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3

What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Matthew 5:1-12 – Roman Missal

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.”

Spiritual Reading

From St. Bernard, abbot

Let us make haste to our brethren who are awaiting us.

Why should our praise and glorification, or even the celebration of this feast day mean anything to the saints? What do they care about earthly honors when their heavenly Father honors them by fulfilling the faithful promise of the Son? What does our commendation mean to them? The saints have no need of honor from us; neither does our devotion add the slightest thing to what is theirs. Clearly, if we venerate their memory, it serves us, not them. But I tell you, when I think of them, I feel myself inflamed by a tremendous yearning. Calling the saints to mind inspires, or rather arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company, so desirable in itself. We long to share in the citizenship of heaven, to dwell with the spirits of the blessed, to join the assembly of patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the council of apostles, the great host of martyrs, the noble company of confessors and the choir of virgins. In short, we long to be united in happiness with all the saints. But our dispositions change. The Church of all the first followers of Christ awaits us, but we do nothing about it. The saints want us to be with them, and we are indifferent. The souls of the just await us, and we ignore them. Come, brothers, let us at length spur ourselves on. We must rise again with Christ, we must seek the world which is above and set our mind on the things of heaven. Let us long for those who are longing for us, hasten to those who are waiting for us, and ask those who look for our coming to intercede for us. We should not only want to be with the saints, we should also hope to possess their happiness. While we desire to be in their company, we must also earnestly seek to share in their

glory. Do not imagine that there is anything harmful in such an ambition as this; there is no danger in setting our hearts on such glory. When we commemorate the saints we are inflamed with another yearning: that Christ our life may also appear to us as he appeared to them and that we may one day share in his glory. Until then we see him, not as he is, but as he became for our sake. He is our head, crowned, not with glory, but with the thorns of our sins. As members of that head, crowned with thorns, we should be ashamed to live in luxury; his purple robes are a mockery rather than an honor. When Christ comes again, his death shall no longer be proclaimed, and we shall know that we also have died, and that our life is hidden with him. The glorious head of the Church will appear and his glorified members will shine in splendor with him, when he forms this lowly body anew into such glory as belongs to himself, its head. Therefore, we should aim at attaining this glory with a wholehearted and prudent desire. That we may rightly hope and strive for such blessedness, we must above all seek the prayers of the saints. Thus, what is beyond our own powers to obtain will be granted through their intercession.

How to be a Saint – Lesson and Discussion

Discussion Questions: How does one become a saint? What characteristics do the saints have in common? Which saints do you look up to and why? Do you believe saints are just like us? Why or why not? What makes a saint a “saint”?

How do we become saints? A saint is simply anyone who has died and is in Heaven. To become a saint in heaven we must live a holy life here on earth first. There are three steps to become a saint: Pray, practice virtue to a heroic degree, and imitate Christ. We will look more closely at each of these steps. In this lesson the third step is discussed.

Imitate Christ

The Gospel Reading for the feast of All Saints day is about the beatitudes. The last step of becoming a saint is imitating Christ. We imitate Christ when we live the beatitudes. Jesus brings to light the stark reality in order to become a saint one must not just accept these beatitudes, but embrace them. “The starting point is in the concrete conditions of human life, where suffering is not a chance occurrence, but rather a reality that is connected with the very structure of life. Jesus did not come to do away with suffering, but to redeem it by making it a means of salvation and eternal happiness.”[1] When we unite our struggles, sufferings, and persecutions and unite them with Christ with a sincere heart this is heroic. **Why would this be heroic?** It is heroic because our body screams for comfort. Our fallen nature tends to whine and complain. When we are hurt our tendency is to take vengeance on those who hurt us. In fact “our natural inclinations, and passions are prone to evil from our very childhood; and if not corrected by self-denial, they will certainly carry us to hell.”[2] We must follow the narrow path. We put on Christ. “All the saints have followed the itinerary of

the beatitudes – Jesus himself to a supreme degree; for he willed to take upon himself all human sufferings and tribulations in order to teach us how to sanctify them. In Jesus who was poor, suffering, meek, merciful, peacemaking and persecuted, and who attained to glory by this path, Christians will find the most perfect embodiment of the beatitudes of the gospel.”[3]

All the Saints have imitated Christ in such a perfect way that the Church points to these men and women saying to the faithful, “Imitate them, as they have imitated Christ.” What an honor it would be if someone were to say of our life, “Imitate N. _____ as he or she imitated Christ.” Pope Benedict XVI expressed this goal of the Christian at the Holy Thursday Mass when he said, “Dear friends, it is clear that configuration to Christ is the precondition and the basis for all renewal. But perhaps at times the figure of Jesus Christ seems too lofty and too great for us to dare to measure ourselves by him. The Lord knows this. So he has provided ‘translations’ on a scale that is more accessible and closer to us. For this same reason, Saint Paul did not hesitate to say to his communities: Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. For his disciples, he was a ‘translation’ of Christ’s manner of life that they could see and identify with. Ever since Paul’s time, history has furnished a constant flow of other such ‘translations’ of Jesus’ way into historical figures.”[4]