

## *Called to Live Lives of Sanctity*

Revelation 7:9-17 (November 1, 2020)

### ***Revelation 7:9-17***

<sup>9</sup>After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!” <sup>11</sup>And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, <sup>12</sup>singing, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” <sup>14</sup>I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup>For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. <sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; <sup>17</sup>for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

### ***Historical Context***

As early as the 4th century AD, the Church established November 1st as a day to give thanks to God for those who were martyred for the Christian faith – a day that became known as “All Saints Day.” In the 11th century AD, the Church circled November 2nd as a day of commemoration and thanksgiving to God for all the faithful who have departed this life in faith. And so, November 2nd became known as “All Souls Day” on the Church’s calendar.

### ***Theme: Called to Live Lives of Sanctity***

Revelation 7:9-17 is a passage with broad implications. In contrast to the first eight verses in this chapter which depict a specific number of worshipers (144,000), Revelation 7:9 casts a larger and more general vision for those who are able to worship around the throne of the Lamb. Beginning with verse 9, the writer describes a great multitude that is countless, numbering those from every tribe and people, and language. There is no limit to the scope of this multitude, be it geographic, ethnic, numeric, linguistic, economic, and on and on the list goes. This multitude is a blow-your-mind kind of multitude that no one can fully grasp. Most importantly, this passage reminds us that the vision for sainthood is all encompassing. It is all-inclusive.

Moreover, this multitude is seen *and* heard and is known as an active group. They do not wait to be served by God, but they actively seek to serve God regularly. On this Feast Day of All Saints, Christians around the world gather to celebrate the lives of those saints who have gone on before us. We give thanks for those saints living still today. And, we ponder how all of us -- you and me -- are called to live lives of sanctity. This passage reminds us that being a faithful witness -- like the great multitude -- is the baptismal vocation of us all. It also reminds us that when we live out our Christian vocation, we find freedom in the God who sustains all of us.