

Mass Parts 33/52: *Memorial of Saints*



In each of the Eucharistic Prayers at the Mass, there is a Memorial of the Saints. This is a reminder that we are a part of the great Communion of Saints. Some in this communion are already in heaven (Church Triumphant), some are still working out their salvation on earth (Church Militant), and some are being purified in Purgatory (Church Suffering). The Church Triumphant is already gathered in heaven at the eternal banquet of the Lamb. It is this banquet in which we are participating through the Sacramental nature of the Mass. So the saints in turn are gathering at our Mass as well.

First to be named in all lists of the saints is our Blessed Mother: Mary. She is the Mother of the Church and of us all, as given to us by Christ from the Cross (Jn 19:25-27). She is also the Mother of God, as defined by the Council of Ephesus in 431. This title of *Theotokos* (the God-bearer), does not make her superior to God. We in the Catholic Church do NOT worship Mary, but we do venerate her. What is the difference? In the middle of the eighth century in the Greek Orthodox regions of the Church, an argument arose about the use of Icons, or pictures of the Saints. Not just the saints themselves, but their actual images were being used in a worshipful sense. What followed was a war (yes, with actual violence and death), between the *Iconoclasts* (those who tore down the images) and the *Iconodules* (those who loved the images). The Second Council of Nicaea was called in 787 to settle the issue. This council found in favor of the Iconodules by defining the differences in worship and veneration as *latria*, *dulia*, and *hyperdulia*. *Latria* belongs to worship of God alone. We worship, have *latria*, only for God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We have veneration (*dulia*) for the saints and their images and their relics. *Dulia* does not have the character of sacrifice with its worship. It gives honor to the saints and things associated with them, but is not actual worship. *Hyperdulia* is reserved for Mary alone. It is the highest veneration, the highest *dulia* (the *hyper / dulia*) that we can offer to a human without crossing the line into worship and *latria*. These Iconoclastic controversies and misunderstandings continued through the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s and into our own recent history with the whitewashing of churches in the 1960s and 70s.

Pope John XXIII, just before the Second Vatican Council met in the 1960s, added the name of St. Joseph to the Roman Canon, which is now called Eucharistic Prayer I. Pope Francis, quite recently, has added the name of St. Joseph to all of the Eucharistic Prayers. Eucharistic Prayer I also includes 2 long lists of names of saints and martyrs. In Eucharistic Prayer III, we have the option to add the names of the patron saints of the parish or the saint of the day. The II and IV Eucharistic Prayers just say "and all the saints." So if you hear a giant list of names at Mass, you know I am using Eucharistic Prayer I. If you hear me add St. Ann and St. Aloysius, you know I am using Eucharistic Prayer III. Don't worry about the Immaculate Conception, the Blessed Mother is mentioned already in every Eucharistic Prayer.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Prayers for the Living Hierarchy