



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



All Saints

We celebrate today the Solemnity of All Saints. To prepare ourselves to celebrate this great feast, let us bring to the Lord all that we know to be in need of his healing and forgiveness, and call upon the saints to intercede for us.

There is for us on this Feast of All Saints a unique joy and peace, and a great confirmation that the Lord's mercy awaits us at the end of our struggle here below, and indeed is with us in every moment of that struggle.

By faith we know that today we are surrounded on all sides by the great company of the holy men and women of all times and places. And the great impression we have from their presence is an impression of their warmth, of their kindness, of their understanding, of their gracious welcoming of us into their presence. Here are the most noble, the most loving human beings who have ever lived, the ones in whom God has in fact realized the glorious possibilities of human nature under grace, here in the midst of this world of struggle, of sin, of weakness, of darkness, of heaviness, in which holiness can seem so impossible. Here at last are men and women who can understand us, who can understand me, who can understand our deepest aspirations -- for yes, despite all our weakness, all our falls, all our falling down so much of the time into mediocrity, for yes, despite it all, our deepest aspirations are for what they have realized, for who they have become. And we discover with immense joy that their understanding of us is an immensely loving understanding, immensely kind, immensely gracious, immensely welcoming. With, as it were, an exquisite courtesy, they welcome us as though we were one of them, they as it were overlook, as it were do not notice -- although they see all things -- our faults, our weakness, the scars left from our sins, our proneness to fall yet again -- they welcome us as though we were one of them, and indeed we are one of them, in that Christ, by his infinite mercy, lives in us, too, as he lives in them, and all that they did in their life they did by him.

It is as if, for a blessed little while, we are suddenly transferred out of the struggle of this present life to the ages without end of peace and joy and fellowship which await us at the end of the struggle. And when we return to the struggle of this life, we return with a renewed awareness of faith that this great company of the saints is always with us, always surrounding us, always waiting to be present to us immediately that we call upon them; that this great company of the saints knows us, understands us, as no other human beings do, that they love us as no others do, that they are constantly there encouraging, calling, giving hope, and interceding -- interceding always, for us. We return with the renewed conviction of faith that, if we but turn to the Lord, then we too, despite all that seems to be the case in this world and in this struggle, we too will one day be like the saints, will one day be one of them, and join their company forever.



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May we rest, and be at peace on this day, full of joy and confidence, transported suddenly, for a while, to where it is all leading, conversing as it were on this day with the saints who are our friends, with, we may by the grace and mercy of God say, our friends the saints.