

Pope Benedict XVI: "Every Christian is called to be a saint"

On the solemnity of All Saints, the Holy Father stressed that not only all Christians are called to sanctity, but that every human being is called to be a saint.

11/08/2007

Recalling that "in the early days of Christianity members of the Church were called 'saints,'" the Holy Father said that "indeed, a Christian is

already holy because baptism unites him to Jesus and his paschal mystery, but he also has to become holy by conforming himself ever more closely to Christ."

"Sometimes people think that sanctity is a privilege reserved for a chosen few," the Pope added. "But in reality every Christian is called to be a saint, as is every human being!"

The Holy Father cited St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians: God has chosen us in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him" (Ephes 1:3-4).

"Therefore all human beings are called to sanctity, which ultimately means living as God's children, in that 'likeness' to him according to which mankind was created. All men and women are children of God, and all should become what they are

through the demanding path of freedom."

The Pope noted that "the Church has wisely placed in close succession the feast of All Saints and the commemoration of all the faithful departed. Our prayers of praise to God and veneration of the blessed souls in heaven is united to our prayer of petition for those who have preceded us in the passage from this world to eternal life."

"At the center of the assembly of the saints," the Pontiff concluded, "shines the Virgin Mary, 'more humble and more exalted than any other creature' (Dante, Paradiso 32, 2). Placing our hand in hers, we are infused with new strength to walk along the path to sanctity. To her we entrust our commitment to be faithful every day, and we pray to her on this day for our dear departed ones with the profound hope of one

day finding ourselves together again with them in the glorious communion of the saints."

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