The Solemnity of All Saints

Brothers and sisters, for fourteen Sundays now, we have been on a journey together. We began with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, moved through the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and finally explored the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and today, **temperance**.

And how fitting that we conclude this entire series on the Solemnity of All Saints!

Because today, the Church reminds us of the whole purpose of every gift and every virtue we have discussed**: to become saints!** And perhaps no virtue better captures what that journey requires than temperance.

Now, when we hear the word *temperance*, we probably think of things like avoiding too much alcohol, resisting that second helping of dessert, or perhaps putting down our phones before we've wasted another hour scrolling through them!

And yes, temperance involves those things. But temperance is about something far greater. **Temperance is the virtue that makes us free. Free not merely to do whatever we want, but free to love as God created us to love.**

The Catechism tells us that temperance moderates our attraction to pleasures and helps us maintain a proper balance in our use of created goods (CCC 1809).

Notice something important here: the Church doesn't teach us that pleasure is evil. Food is good! Friendship is good! Marriage, recreation, the beauty of creation—all are gifts from God. But a gift becomes a problem when we begin loving the gift more than the Giver.

Think about it. If I cannot put down my phone to listen to someone who needs me, am I really free? If I cannot resist my anger when someone offends me, am I really free? If I cannot say no to an unhealthy appetite, then who's really in charge—me, or my appetite?

Temperance doesn't destroy our desires. It puts them in their proper place, so that our desires serve love, rather than love becoming a servant of our desires.

And this brings us to today's Gospel: the Beatitudes. Jesus climbs the mountain and announces something absolutely revolutionary. He tells us who is truly blessed, truly happy. And notice whom He identifies!

The poor in spirit. Those who mourn. The meek. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The merciful. The clean of heart. The peacemakers. Those persecuted for righteousness. Not exactly the world's list of successful people, is it?

The world says, "Blessed are those who have everything they want!" Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

The world says, "Blessed are those who can impose their will on everyone else!" Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek."

The world says, "Blessed are those who satisfy every desire!" Jesus says, **"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God."**

And there, brothers and sisters, is the profound connection between temperance and holiness. The saints were not people who had no desires. They were people whose desires had been transformed by grace and by discipline. They learned to desire God above everything else.

And that brings us to a beautiful insight from the spiritual tradition: **the problem with our hearts is often not that we desire too much, but that we settle for too little.** We settle for passing pleasures when God offers eternal joy. We settle for human approval when God offers us His own love. We settle for possessions that eventually perish when God offers us Himself! **Temperance helps us refuse the lesser good when it threatens to rob us of the greater one.**

And here is something else worth remembering: temperance also protects the other cardinal virtues we've discussed. Without temperance, prudence can become mere cleverness in getting what we want. Justice can become harshness toward others. And fortitude can become stubbornness or even brutality.

But when our desires are rightly ordered toward God, all these virtues work together to make us more like Christ.

And now listen to the extraordinary promise in today's second reading. St. John tells us: "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed." And then he tells us that when Christ appears, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Think about that! God doesn't merely want us to become better-behaved human beings. He wants us to become like His Son!

And St. John adds that everyone who has this hope makes himself pure, as Christ is pure. That's the ultimate purpose of temperance: not simply self-control, **but purity of**

heart that prepares us to see God. And what does that look like when it reaches its fulfillment?

Look at today's first reading from Revelation! St. John sees an enormous multitude, from every nation, race, people, and tongue, standing before the throne of God, clothed in white robes, crying out in worship. These are the saints!

And when John asks who they are, he is told that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Notice: they weren't made saints because they never struggled, never sinned, or never fell. They became saints because they allowed themselves (yes, indeed even *through* their struggles, sins, and falls) to be washed clean by the Blood of Jesus Christ!

They cooperated with His grace. They repented. They persevered. And now they possess the one thing every human heart ultimately longs for: **God Himself! Brothers and sisters, that is our destiny, too.**

And so, as we conclude these fourteen weeks, I want to leave you with one final thought: You know, I think one of the greatest spiritual dangers of our modern age isn't that we've stopped believing in God. It's that we've become so busy with everything else that we've convinced ourselves we simply don't have time for Him.

Think about how often we say, "I'd love to pray more, Father, but I'm just too busy." Or, "I'd love to spend time in Adoration, but life is crazy right now." Or, "Once things settle down, I'll get serious about my faith."

But here's the uncomfortable truth: Life isn't going to settle down. There's always going to be another deadline, another project, another ballgame, another responsibility, another notification demanding our attention.

And here's a little experiment: Open the screen-time report on your phone. Look at how many hours you spent this past week scrolling, watching videos, checking the news, or doing things you can barely remember.

Now imagine if you had spent even a fraction of that time with Jesus.

Perhaps the problem isn't always that we don't have time for God. *Perhaps the problem is that we've given God whatever time is left over after everything else has taken its share.*

And that's precisely where temperance comes in! It gives us the freedom to tell all those lesser things, **"You are good—but you are not my God!"** Because imagine standing before Jesus at the end of your life and saying, "Lord, I really did want to become a saint. I just never found the time."

Brothers and sisters, the saints didn't become saints because they had more time than we do. They became saints because they gave God first place in the time they had. And we can begin doing exactly that—today.

The Christian life is not primarily about learning to say "no." It is about learning to say "yes" to something infinitely greater.

We say no to sin so that we can say yes to grace. We say no to selfishness so that we can say yes to love. We say no to the tyranny of our appetites so that we can say yes to the freedom of the children of God. And ultimately, we say no to anything that would keep us from saying yes to Heaven.

Today, as we approach this altar, remember that the saints we honor are not merely figures from the distant past. They are our brothers and sisters, alive in Christ, praying for us, and awaiting the day when we will join them.

And the very same Jesus who made them holy now comes to us in the Holy Eucharist, offering us the grace to become what they have become.

So this week, don't merely admire the saints. Imitate them. Give Jesus fifteen minutes every day that you would otherwise give to your phone, your television, or some other distraction. And if you can, come spend an hour with Him in Eucharistic Adoration. Not because you have nothing better to do—but because there *is* nothing better you could do than spend time with the One who created you for Heaven.

Because in the end, brothers and sisters, **the greatest tragedy would not be that we failed to acquire everything this world had to offer. The greatest tragedy would be that we gained the whole world, but failed to become the saints God created us to be.**

May we never settle for anything less. All you holy men and women, pray for us!