

Sanctification by the blood – All Saints 2024

Have you heard of Saint Augustine. Around 400 AD.

One of history's greatest theologians – they call him the “father of the church” – in terms of teaching.

Before he became a Christian he was studying “Rhetoric”.

He became a professor of Rhetoric.

“Rhetoric” is linguistics – and the art of persuasion.

His job was to teach politicians to say nothing using as many words as possible.

It's well known that before Augustine's conversion he was a womaniser – through and through.

His mother said he was “floundering in the broiling sea of fornication,”

At one stage he was living with two mistresses – his mother was not happy.

He told her, “my life is just miserable unless I am folded in the arms of a female”.

Anyway, this is a true little story that happened soon after Augustine's conversion:

He was walking down the street and saw one of his mistresses standing there (I think reading between the lines “Mistress” is code for prostitute) anyway he walked straight past her – he didn't even look at her.

She was perplexed.

So, she ran and stood in front of him again.

He walked straight past her again.

She was totally confused.

She ran up to him said and “Augustine, Augustine it is I”.

He kept walking and said, “Yes but it is no longer I”

As Paul says: *if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!* ([2 Cor. 5:17](#))

Interestingly it was Augustine – who became Saint Augustine the patron saint of brewers, he was instrumental in formulating the present doctrine of celibacy for priests in the Catholic Church.

For him celibacy was the only way for him to get out of the sexual addiction he was in.

“Augustine, Augustine, it is I”.

“Yes but it is no longer I”

...the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ([2 Cor. 5:17](#))

That's sanctification – the new life after faith has embedded itself in a person's heart.

Today we remember the saints gone before us – they are our friends, our mentors, artists, pastors, doctors, accountants, teachers, nurses, mothers, fathers, siblings; each one made right with God through Jesus sacrifice.

We grieve them.

Today we hold up the Apostle's creed: *I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen*

We remember the things our loved ones did – the great things, probably few and far between - but more so, the little things, the little things only you know about.

Let's be reminded what makes a saint. It's not what we do, It's what Jesus has done – it's the blood he shed – It's his pure and holy blood that sanctifies us.

Hebrews gives us a picture of what it was like for the priests of old – how they had to deal with the blood of sacrifices made day after day - applying the blood to people, to things.

[Hebrews 9:24-28,](#)

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place [in the temple] every year with blood that is not his own.

Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all ... to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Hebrews also describes how much greater is the blood of Jesus:

“For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctify a defiled person.... how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” ([Hebrews 9:13-14](#)).

The book of Hebrews emphasises that sanctification is about being set apart to

be cleansed from sin and impurity so we can live in the presence of God, so we can be served by him and we can be prepared to serve others.

Hebrew tells us that “things” were also set aside and made Holy, and used to serve God’s people.

“And in the same way [the priest] sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the Law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (9:21-22).

Hebrews describes the transition between the priests of old dealing with blood day after day and Jesus the Great High Priest who offers his own blood to cleanse us from our sin – once and for all.

I wish we knew who wrote the book of Hebrews?

It is the heart and soul of sacramental theology.

We are a sacramental Church did you know that?

We are sacramental, like the Orthodox, the Catholics, and the Anglicans – 90 percent of Christianity is Sacramental – in other word we focus on Jesus’ blood given and shed for us at his sacrifice.

That’s why we stand and sit and do strange things.

That’s why we insist on saying all the words at the altar – *take and eat this is Jesus body given for you, take and drink this is Jesus’ blood – given and shed for you for the forgiveness of all your sins.*

Holy Communion, is with angels and archangels, with all the saints, with each other, the blood of the sacrifice is promised and received with the wine – like the days of old it is sprinkled on all who come.

So, it is Jesus the high priest himself who sprinkles His blood on us and sanctifies us, making us saints.

A saint is not morally pure, you don’t have to have performed a miracle, it is to receive the blood of Jesus.

You know Murphy thought he had to perform a miracle to become a saint – and he tried and tried – nothing.

One day he was buttering his toast and he dropped it –as he often did.

The toast fell to the ground – you know what happened to his buttered toast.

Murphy grumbled and bent over to pick it up and suddenly noticed something he had never seen before.

The toast had landed butter-side up!

In Murphy's world the butter always landed face down – It happened so often he made it into a law – he called it “Murphys law”.

But this day the toast landed butter-side up.

He ran and got the priest because he thought this was a miracle and now he could finally become a saint.

The priest got down on his knees and looked long and hard at the toast – the butter-side up.

He wasn't so sure – so he went and got the Bishop.

The Bishop got down on his knees and looked long and hard at the toast – butter-side up.

He wasn't so sure – so he went and got the pope.

The pope got down on his knees and looked long and hard at the toast - butter-side up.

The pope looked at it from all angles – then he finally got up and looked at Murphy seriously – and said – I'm sorry Murphy this is not a miracle – you just buttered the wrong side of the toast this morning.

Murphy was bitterly sad because he wanted to become a saint.

Murphy is not a saint – if only the pope offered him Holy Communion and declared him pure and washed by the blood of Jesus – he could have become a saint.

As I said Friday night saints are Holy, Holy, Holy people – washed clean in the holiest, purest blood there is – the blood of Jesus – who sinned not.

You and I are these Holy, Holy, Holy, people.

Go and live the sanctified life.

When the world calls you back to sin, calls you away from Jesus – remember Augustine.

Augustine, Augustine, it is I.

Yes, but it is no longer I.

Do serve because you are a saint – Don't serve to become a saint. Amen.

Lord, we thank you that we are made saints for service in your kingdom. Thankyou for Jesus sacrifice, thank you for Jesus shedding his pure holy innocent blood for us. Amen.