
ORTHODOX OBLATES OF ST. BENEDICT



From the Holy Rule of St. Benedict (from the Prologue)

Now, brethren, that we have asked the Lord who it is that shall dwell in His tabernacle, we have heard the conditions for dwelling there; and if we fulfill the duties of tenants, we shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Our hearts and our bodies must, therefore, be ready to do battle under the biddings of holy obedience; and let us ask the Lord that He supply by the help of His grace what is impossible to us by nature. And if, flying from the pains of hell, we desire to reach life everlasting, then, while there is yet time, and we are still in the flesh, and are able during the present life to fulfill all these things, we must make haste to do now what will profit us forever.

We are, therefore, about to found a school of the Lord's service, in which we hope to introduce nothing harsh or burdensome. But even if, to correct vices or to preserve charity, sound reason dictateth anything that turneth out somewhat stringent, do not at once fly in dismay from the way of salvation, the beginning of which cannot but be narrow. But as we advance in the religious life and

faith, we shall run the way of God's commandments with expanded hearts and unspeakable sweetness of love; so that never departing from His guidance and persevering in the monastery in His doctrine till death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ, and be found worthy to be coheirs with Him of His kingdom.

2 Maccabees 12:39-46

And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchres of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain.

Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain.

And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them.

It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.



Orthodox Benedictine Saint Days for November

7: Willebrord (English) Apostle to the Frisians	(+739)
14: Sidonius (Irish)	(+690)
14: Albert of Utrecht (German)	(+784)
17: Hilda of Whitby (English)	(+680)
18: Odo of Cluny (French)	(+690)
20: Bernward (German)	(+1022)
23: Trudo (French)	(+695)

Meditation

The Significance of Numbers for All Saints Day

Monastero di San Benedetto, Norcia

During Eastertide, St. Augustine preached every year on the meaning of the 153 large fish that were miraculously caught by the apostles in the Sea of Galilee after the Resurrection of our Lord. The assembly in Hippo knew well this Gospel passage, but every year, they eagerly anticipated St. Augustine's explanation of the numerology. Similarly, the annual celebration of the feast of All Saints provides us the occasion to speak on the numerology of the liturgy. For those who have already heard this explanation, it will be a repetition; however, for those who haven't, it will be a profoundly significant discover into the numbers of the Bible and the liturgy.

How many saints are there? The reading which we just heard from the book of Revelation speaks of 144,000. That's it? It doesn't seem like that many! The text then explains how it arrived at that total. There are 12,000 people in each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The symbolism is clear. Twelve is a mystical number which

“The Solemnity of All Saints offers us this glorious vision of our destiny: the communion of saints in the heavenly liturgy.”

means totality and completeness. If we were to indicate a large number of completeness, we would say “12” twice. Even in Italian, words are repeated to underline their importance. (Think of the Gospels, when our Lord says “Amen, Amen, I say to you”; what He's about to say is important!) Therefore, “twelve by twelve” is a way to express a really large, important number. And what if we were to go over and above, and indicate an astronomically large number? The ancients would indicate this concept adding the number 1,000. Therefore, “12” is already large. “12 by 12” or 144 is a really big number. But, 144,000 is a number so big that it's almost impossible to count.

However, the biblical text gives this number to the Jews. What about the Gentiles? A great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues (Rev 7:9). The concept is the same. An immense multitude of Jews, an immense multitude of Gentiles.

The Roman Canon uses the same numerology. There are two lists of saints in the Roman Canon. Count with me those listed before the consecration. First, there are the apostles: Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Jude. (12)

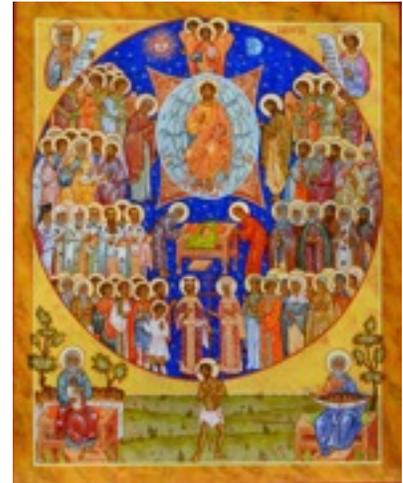
There are twelve saints. Next, the martyrs: Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian. (12)

How many saints are named? 12 and 12 – which multiplied together makes 144. Completeness, totality, all of the saints.

Now, let's count those named in the second list, following the consecration. John the Baptist gets mentioned first because of his unique relationship to the Church in Rome. In fact, the Cathedral of Rome is the Basilica of St. John the Lateran, not St. Peter's Basilica. So, after St. John the Baptist, the head of the choir of saints, two groups of saints follow, a list of male saints and a list of female saints. Let's count them:

Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter. (7)
Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia. (7)

Seven men and seven women. The number seven, just like the number 12, means perfection, fullness. Therefore, the second list, just like the first, means “All of the saints”, a huge multitude, which no one can really count...the communion of saints. Many saints have a feast day in the liturgical calendar, and still others have their name etched in the martyrology, but don't have a special feast day. Finally, there are still many

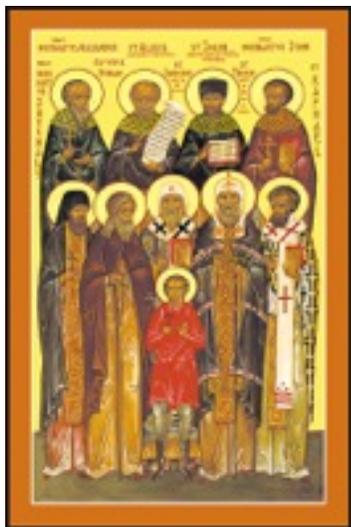


unknown saints – or rather, those who are only known to God. Today, we celebrate their feast: the Solemnity of All Saints.

In the liturgy, we are surrounded by the angels and the saints. Perhaps we are used to thinking that we are the principle subjects of the liturgy – but that would be a hedonistic idea. In the liturgy, the holy angels bring our offering to the heavenly altar before the Divine Majesty, and we get transported out of ourselves, we are led to the palace of the King, we enter into this other reality.

The Solemnity of All Saints offers us this glorious vision of our destiny: the communion of saints in the heavenly liturgy. Let's pray to Our Lord that, today in this Mass, we may have a foretaste of the joy which the guests experience at the marriage supper of the Lord (cf. Rev. 19:9).

All Souls Day



On November 2, the Church commemorates all the Faithful Departed. The white vestments of All Saints day are laid aside, and the dark robes and emblems of mourning are worn in their place. The memorial day of the dead comes down to us from the first Christians, and, in the course of centuries, November 2 was selected for the annual commemoration of all the Faithful Departed in the churches of the Latin rite.

In every land and in every Christian soul resound the mournful tones of prayer for the dead: "Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace."

This month, November, is set aside from its very beginning, as a month of commemoration of the Faithful Departed. Therefore, let us resolve, as an act of mercy, to pray for the dead as often as we can this month. The Monastic Diurnal contains a full office for the dead, beginning with long vigil of Matins, which if you can only find time once a year to pray, this month is a fine time for it.

THE NEXT MONTHLY RETREAT

November 8, 2015

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

OFFICIANT: Father John
CANTOR: Subdeacon Joseph
READER: David
MEDITATION: Bp. Anthony

LUNCHEON LIST

MAIN COURSE: Dcn. Lazarus
DRINKS: Benedict
SNACKS: Wilfrid
SALAD: Bp. Anthony
DESERT: Ross

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