



ALL SAINTS

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault
(Fontgombault, November 1st, 2025)

Petrus eram dictus.
Peter was I called.
(Peter of the Star's Epitaph)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
My dearly beloved Sons,

FOR POPULAR PIETY, the solemnity of All Saints remains associated with the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, the office of which is usually celebrated on the following day, November 2nd, but will fall this year on the 3rd, next Monday, because the 2nd is a Sunday. During these days, the faithful visit churchyards, pray a few moments on the tombs of their family members and friends, and bring flowers on them.

A plenary indulgence — which can be applied in suffrage to the souls in Purgatory only, bringing them total remission of the temporal punishment due to their already forgiven sins — is granted to the faithful who visit with devotion between the 1st and 8th of November a cemetery and pray there for the souls of the departed, even if it is only a mental prayer. The same applies to those who, on the day of the celebration of the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, visit with piety a church or an oratory and recite there a *Pater* and the *Credo*. To gain this plenary indulgence, three conditions are added to the prescribed works: sacramental confession, Eucharistic

communion, and prayer for the Supreme Pontiff's intentions. These three conditions may be fulfilled several days before or after the execution of the prescribed work. There should also be a total lack of attachment to sin, even venial sin. Should this disposition be lacking, or if the three aforementioned conditions are not fulfilled, the indulgence will be only partial. Don't let us forsake our departed in the painful expectation of Purgatory.

Centuries elapse. The call for help of those who came before us, their expectation of a humble prayer, remain topical, coming from the past and aiming towards future. This message is summed up in a few words on the tomb of Peter of the Star — *Petrus a Stella* — who died in 1114. He was first buried in the old chapter of the monastery, and his recumbent figure and sarcophagus were found in 1954 under the gate of today's great sacristy which opens into the cloister. These remains were translated to the nave of the church, in front of the grid, where you may now come and pray near the holy founder of the cenobitic monastic life in Fontgombault. Peter is represented with his cowl, a crozier in one hand and the Rule of St. Benedict in the other one, and he wears the monastic tonsure. An epitaph in uncials exhorts us:

*Petrus eram dictus,
nunc sum sine nomine pulvis
Sed miserante Deo,
de pulvere credo resurgam.
Dic homo qui transis
Deus ut mihi propitietur.
Tunc quod es ipse fui,
et quod nunc sum tu quoque fies.*

I was called Peter,
I am now a nameless dust.
But by God's mercy,
I believe I shall rise from dust.
Ask, O man who dost pass by,
God to be propitious on me.
What thou art now, I was then,
and what I am now, someday
thou shalt become.

In his petition, Peter confesses the dogma of the resurrection of the body. The body becomes dust after death. But the soul keeps living, knowing, loving, according to a mode proper to it, since it is in a state of violence, being bereft of its body. At the end of time, it will receive anew a body, as we profess in the Creed: "I believe the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

The Book of the Apocalypse we have just read has introduced us before the Throne of God, facing the Lamb. In this grandiose vision, God is not alone. After the hundred and forty-four thousand, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel, there appears “a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues.”^a This multitude proclaims: “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!”^b As for the angels, they stand around the throne and fall on their faces before God, saying:

a. Ap 7:9.

b. v. 10.

Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.^c

c. v. 12.

Among this throng are the saints of all times. They are those who allowed the grace of God to bear fruit during their earthly life. In them grace has been fruitful, it has shone forth and reached out. Not only did it orient them towards the Lord, but it made of them channels to lead others to God. The saints are now in the eternity, near God, communing with His glory, and they give thanks for so many gifts they received. They live in beatitude.

As for us, how can we allow the grace of God to carry out its work in us?

Wouldn't it be possible to bring together the vision of the Apocalypse and the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the gospel of the beatitudes? Jesus goes up on the mountain. He is sitting, preparing to teach. His disciples have come to Him. As light and glory were radiating from the throne of God, thus the Word of God, the Word of the Father made flesh, is going to enlighten the hearts of His disciples through His teaching. And what does He say? A word keeps recurring, as a chorus, “Blessed.”

The great similitude between the crowd of the Apocalypse and the disciples is that they are in a state of bliss.

Yet, at first sight, their motives for joy seem utterly different. The former contemplate God. They are in a state of rest.

The latter are undergoing distress and trial. They are the poor in spirit. They are those who mourn, the meek; those who

hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers; those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, reviled for God's sake. Which motive could we invoke for their joy, if not the lightness of spirit, the freedom stemming from the mere fact that they already belong totally to God?

Among the succession of saints throughout the ages, one of them is the icon of holiness, she who is all-holy, and whom we address so often, "Hail Mary, full of grace." A few words, too often worn-out in our aged hearts, to which we should ceaselessly give anew the weight of the mystery with which they are fraught. Pronouncing the *Hail Mary* means deeply bowing before the holiness of her who is Mother of God and our Mother. It means giving thanks for the work of God in a human person who, in her eternal youth, could but keep answering "Yes" to God. It means asking her to pray for us, poor sinners, so that we too may take part in her youth of heart, now and in the hour in which we shall have to pronounce our last "Yes," the hour of our death.

As a conclusion, let us receive the precious exhortation of the Apostle Peter:

Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall; so there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.^d

d. 2 P I:10-11.

Amen.

