

## Feast of All Saints 2015

*Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children, and that is what we are.... My dear people we are already the children of God.*

Concurrent with the Synod in Rome on the family, Archbishop Bernard called all his priests together for a conference at Oscott to discuss some of the issues that the Holy Father was discussing with his bishops and cardinals. One of the ideas that came out of our discussion time and time again was that of the fundamental goodness of each and every human being. Regardless of our sexual orientation, regardless of our marital status, each and every one of us is already a child of God. God's love is a level playing field. God loves us where we are, not where we think we might like to be or where the Church tells us we ought to be. God loves us here and now in the ordinary concrete circumstances of our everyday life.

In contrast to this is the prayer we shall pray after Holy Communion: "We adore you, O God, who alone are holy". The delicious paradox of the Christian life is precisely this, to know ourselves to be loved as God's children here and now while at the same time to know that between God and humanity there still exists an infinite distance. God is closer to us than our own heart beat while at the same time He is further away than the most distant star.

To be a Christian, to be a saint, is to have started a journey across this infinite distance. *What we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed.... When it is revealed we shall be like him. We shall see him as he really is. "Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God."* The vision of God, seeing God, becoming like God, even from within our humanity, becoming God, is the endpoint of our journey, the purpose of our whole lives. It is to this glorious state that *we eagerly hasten as pilgrims advancing by faith.*

Another image for this journey, this purification, is that of martyrdom. To embark on this journey is to *wash our robes white again in the blood of the Lamb*, to take up the royal road of the Cross and to follow the Lamb to heaven itself.

What's more, on this journey, we are never alone. Surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses on every side, we can feel the intercessory power of Our Blessed Lady, of Blessed Joseph, her spouse and of all the saints. St Thérèse shows us her little way of love. St John of the Cross leads us through the dark night. Blessed John Henry Newman shows us the way of conversion and truth. Pope St John Paul II gives us strength and courage. The angels and archangels guard us and guide us. When we fall down, they raise us up. When we doubt, they give us faith.

Knit together in one family, one communion, one happy band of pilgrims ever marching onwards to our heavenly homeland.

In John's vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, centre-stage is the Lamb: "*Victory to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.*" It's not just any old blood in which we wash our robes. We wash our robes in nothing less than the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If the Christian life really is a pilgrimage, then it is a pilgrimage that Jesus has already undertaken. Jesus is the journey, the journey is Jesus. Nothing is static. Nothing remains the same.

*"Amen. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and glory and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen."*

Fr Michael

