

Solemnity of All Saints – 11/01/20

Several years ago while I was still studying for the priesthood I was sent to Omaha, NE for some additional priestly formation.

While I was there I met a priest from Philadelphia and he told me that when he was kid he was one of the young boys who ran with Rocky Balboa in the movie Rocky II.

In case you don't remember because it was 41 years ago or you never saw the movie, at one point while Rocky was out on one of his training runs, one-by-one he found himself shadowed by a whole bunch of young fans.

41 years ago or not, I remember that day like it was yesterday. As a young boy of about 13 sitting in that theater watching that scene I wanted to be running with Rocky Balboa – I wanted to run with a champion.

That scene ended with Rocky climbing the stairs of the Philadelphia Museum of Art surrounded by young boys cheering for their hero.

Well, that was great for kids and this priest's part in the movie was pretty insignificant with regards to the overall picture but from a kids perspective he was in one of the greatest movies ever produced and he's still talks about it to this day.

It's still a source of pride for him but now he runs with an eternal hero – Jesus Christ.

Today is the Solemnity of All Saints. Today we honor those who followed Jesus Christ perfectly and climbed Mt. Calvary in imitation of their warrior King – our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

And it is a massive number of saints as we heard today in the first reading from Saint John. “I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue.”

“They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands...who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from? These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”

We are called to be among them. But first we must survive the time of great distress. We must be willing to run with the savior toward Calvary.

Every generation has to endure a sufficient time of distress in order to be awarded the crown of sanctity.

The disciples followed Jesus up the mountain today in the gospel. It was kind of a precursor to Calvary. And on the mountaintop Jesus proclaimed the cost of discipleship.

He ended proclamation with “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the Kingdom

of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven.”

By following closely the teachings of the Catholic Church we will be persecuted for the sake righteousness but we will inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

By running with Jesus we will be insulted, persecuted and falsely accused but we will be eternally blessed.

Every baptized person here today was once clothed in the white robe of salvation when we were washed clean in the waters of Baptism.

Furthermore, we should be making every effort to be renewed time and again in the Blood of the Lamb in the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can worthily receive our Lord in the Holy Eucharist at Mass that he may live in us.

This is our time to run with our eternal hero – Jesus Christ.

This isn't just some small part in a movie. Each one of us has a vital role to play in the Theo-drama of life. Our part in it not only determines our own destiny but even impacts the destiny of others. There is nothing insignificant about it.

Now is undeniably a time of great distress in our country and throughout the whole world but it's our time.

So let's not let it pass us by.