



Ouzkourni Fi Malakoutika
Remember me in Your Kingdom

Homily of Father Philip Raczka during the Divine Liturgy for the memorial of our deceased, «Remember me in Your Kingdom» on Wednesday February 20, 2013 at Our Lady of the Annunciation, West Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Why the Saints Can Pray for Us

First, we must get one thing straight. It is God who works miracles. The Church teaches us that a miracle may happen through the prayers or intercession of a Saint, but God actually works the miracle. So, we should not say I received a miracle from St. Nicholas but, rather, I received a miracle through the intercession of Saint Nicholas.

At the Last Supper, in St. John's Gospel, Jesus told us to love another. In many other places in the Bible it is clear that we are told to love each other. When we love each other we are concerned about each other. The problem of our friend or relative becomes our problem, in that we want them to have a good life. We do not want them to be sick or have financial difficulties etc. We want them to have a solution to whatever difficulties that they have in life.

Saint Paul tells us many times in the Epistles, to pray for each other. Praying for other people is an act of love. We commit them, and their difficulties, to the love of God, asking God to help them. It shows our concern for other people and that we want them to have a happy life.

If on earth, in a sinful situation, in a very imperfect life, we are called to love each other and pray for each other; how much more should the Saints in heaven be able to love us and pray for us? In heaven they are not tempted to sin and they enjoy closer communion with God. It seems illogical to me to say that the Saints, who are more spiritually advanced than we are, do not love us and are not concerned about us. To say so, would imply that their love has decreased in heaven instead of increased.

Some people think that the Saints would not know what is happening on earth because, to know would make them sad, and there is no sadness in heaven. Here we need to be careful, for sometimes love involves sadness at seeing the misfortune of others. God Himself is saddened by the evil on earth. The joy of heaven does not cancel out the ability to be concerned for others. Love is always at work.

How do the Saints in heaven know what is happening here on earth? Somehow they know through the power of God. We cannot say exactly how this works but, the almighty God can certainly handle a small thing like that.

How do the people in heaven hear our prayers? Again they hear them through the power of God. We cannot say exactly how this works but, God makes it work somehow.

So, in heaven there is no sin. In heaven people are closer to God than on earth. In heaven love is supreme and unchallenged. The Saints then continue to follow the commands of Christ to love other people and to pray for others. This means that they love us and pray for us. God in his great power and love somehow lets them know what is happening on earth and lets them hear our prayers. The Saints in turn show their love for us by praying for us. God hears their prayers and grants us miracles and spiritual favors because of the love and prayers of the Saints.