

***Thirty-Second Sunday of Ordinary Time  
Twenty-Second after Pentecost (Latin Mass)  
November 6, 2022  
Year of Saint Joseph***

*“And therefore we also having so great a cloud of witnesses over our head, laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us: Looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

During this month of November, we are encouraged to ask, through our prayers, for the intercession of the saints in heaven. If we reflect upon the Book of Hebrews, particularly the first two verses in chapter 12, we may assume that the saints are allowed to watch our progress as we go through life. We may go so far as to suggest that they “sit in the stands” cheering for us as fans do in an arena setting. Let us take this one step further using this same sports analogy. Assuming the saints are aware of our successes, whooping and hollering for us, then, what is their reaction when we fail?

Do the saints in heaven second guess our decisions? Do they throw something at the screen or belt out words born of frustration as we do? I would hope they would not react as we do toward our decisions as we do to the decisions of the coaches of our favorite sports teams. But this hope that I have must be more than just that—hope. It must be firmly grounded on what the Catholic Church teaches concerning the saints in heaven. So, what does the Catholic Church teaching concerning the awareness of the saints in heaven toward our daily lives, both the failures and the successes.

Let us begin by turning to the great theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas seeking his guidance upon this topic. Saint Thomas would begin by first reminding us that the saints in heaven **MUST** be aware of our lives here upon earth. To understand this clearly, we must first begin with a common assumption which was present in his day as well as in ours. There are religious voices who would declare that the death of any saint is an obstacle to our assistance; one which cannot be overcome. Therefore, we must focus our prayers toward Jesus Christ who is the one true intercessor between God and man. As convincing as this may seem, it contains a few fundamental flaws. First, death is only an obstacle present in our own minds. Jesus Christ conquered death through His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Now, as king of both the living and the dead, He is able to establish the rules under which His kingdom shall be governed. As Sacred Scripture teaches, after His Resurrection He chose to share His power of governance with His remaining Apostles and disciples (John 20:22-23). This authority was subsequently passed down to the successors of this first generation of followers. From there, it passed to their successors down through the continuing generations to our current time. In His Divine benevolence, God has allowed man to become a co-operator in the work of salvation. This honor, once it was given by God, remains active until God chooses the time for its conclusion

(the Second Coming). Until Christ comes again, man, if he abides with God, will seek the salvation of all for the glory of God. This does not cease after a righteous person dies. They still want all to be saved giving praise and glory to God. This begs the question, how could a saint in heaven know what to ask for or how to intercede on our behalf if God did not choose to enlighten them in some fashion? For a person to know how to pray for us, then they must know our needs. Why should that change after death? God allows the saints a partial knowledge of His Divine Knowledge to know how they should pray for us. Coupled with this, they must be allowed by God to be aware of our prayers asking for their assistance. Furthermore, because God's generosity allows the saints to be cognizant of our prayers, then they must also be aware of our lives. Would they now be aware of my failures as well as my successes? Yes, they are aware, but they are not grieved when we fail to avoid sin. Their happiness with God cannot be diminished by our sins. Rather, our gravity of faults and failures toward such a loving God, demands that they pray for us all the more. Due to their closeness with God in Heaven, they understand on a more profound level how our sins injury and ridicule His Divine Love. They very much want us to repent of those actions and behaviors and make amends to God. At this very moment, the angels and saints in heaven are united with the holy souls in Purgatory, praying for both our continued conversion and our union with God. They know and see the Presence of God which we only acknowledge through faith. They want us to go to heaven. Let us repent, turn back to God, and never stop asking for their help.