

## A Great Multitude from Every Nation

The First Reading for All Saints Sunday is Revelation 7:9-17. Beginning with chapter 6 seven seals are opened. They are mostly blood, guts and death. Chapter 7 is an interlude from all that has gone on before and what will continue in chapter 8.

In chapter 7 John sees two scenes. In the first scene he sees the 144,000 sealed (7:1–8), and in the second scene, our reading) he sees the glorious picture of the saints before God’s throne in heaven (7:9–17). Just a quick comment on the 144,000. Some religious groups take that number literally. They strive mightily to be a part that crowd. HOWEVER, that number is representative of all saints past and present. All who have faith in Jesus are in that number. The crowd of people before the throne of God is *countless*.

There are a number of other pictures in this reading that inspire confidence in our hearts:

- Every ethnic group is included.
- The white robes symbolize purity and righteousness of Christ which he won for us in his blood.
- Palm branches represent victory from every bloody battle.
- Elders and four living creatures represent all believers who are now in heaven. We hear this in the Preface in the communion liturgy when the pastor says “with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.” We join them in singing the Sanctus.
- The great tribulation tells us that our life on earth may be difficult. BUT, in the end, we are victors.
- Verse 16 states: *they will hunger no more, neither thirst anymore, the sun shall not strike them.*

Verse 17 wraps it all up. In the OT the Lord promised his people that like a shepherd he would look after them. Jesus identified himself as the Good Shepherd. Here in this scene he stands in the middle of them and wipes away every tear.

Prayer: By your grace, Lord, keep me among the faithful, so that I may forever sing your praises in the glory of heaven. Amen