THE SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS.

When Saint John wrote his letters to the early church, he wasn't writing letters to the dead. He's addressing the living, those like us who struggle every day to live a life of faith in this broken world, who have committed themselves to following the way of Christ in the world.

For John, those who live that life, are sanctified brethren, they are the hallowed, the holy, they are saints. And that is the life all of us have pledged ourselves to following.

When we celebrate the feast of All Saints, we're not celebrating aliens from another planet; we are celebrating our own people, brothers and sisters in Christ whose lives are a continual witness to the love of Christ.

In today's Gospel we have Jesus' charter for his kingdom, the beatitudes, a list of qualities which characterise the sanctified brethren. When we listen to them we can all put faces to the virtues. We remember these people and we know them. The people whose simplicity and littleness shine like a light in a world of darkness.

The gentle people whose energetic non-violence will never win medals; Those who cry and mourn their loss because they have tasted the presence of love; The ones who hunger for what is right and who stay hungry until what is right becomes a reality; Those who scandalise us with their mercy because they exclude no one from its embrace.

The people who have an undivided heart, whose loyalty to God is never in question; Those who not only look for peace but do everything in their power to make peace and build a kingdom among the ruins; The faithful who are not lukewarm, part-time, and plastic Christians, but who suffer persecution for the sake of the kingdom, and who still manage to smile at their persecutors; Those who are snarled at for their beliefs and who meet abuse with a blessing, who sing to the Lord and pray for those who persecute and ridicule them for their faith.

And as Pope Benedict reminded us in his address to young people when he came here, these people are here among us now. They are the same as the saints John addressed in his letters, they are the faithful of Jesus Christ, and they are us, who have been called to holiness. They are real people whose stories may never be told

and whose goodness may never be celebrated, but we celebrate them all today and we bless them in the name of the Lord.