

The Beatific Vision of the Saints (November 1st, Solemnity)

1 John 3:1-3—We Shall See Him as He Is

¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ And every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-3)

1. Children: “children of God” (1 John 3:1)
2. Likeness: at the Parousia (“when he appears), we shall “be like him” (1 John 3:2)
3. Vision: “we shall see him *as he is*” (1 John 3:2)
4. Purity: “pure” or “holy” (Greek *hagnos*) (1 John 3:3)

The Dogma of the Beatific Vision

Pope Benedict XII: *By this constitution, which is to remain in force forever; We, with apostolic authority, define the following*: according to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints who departed from this world before the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and also of the holy apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and other faithful who died after receiving the holy baptism of Christ—provided they were not in need of any purification when they died, or will not be in need of any when they die in the future, or else, if they have been purified after death... all these souls, immediately after death, and in the case of those in need of purification, after the purification mentioned above, since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven, already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment, have been, are, and will be with Christ in heaven, in the heavenly kingdom and paradise, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, *these souls have seen and see the divine essence with an intuitive vision and even face to face, with out the mediation of any creature...* (Benedict XII, Apostolic Constitution *Benedictus Deus*, A.D. 1336)¹

¹ Translation in Heinrich Denzinger, *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (ed. Peter J. Hünermann; San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012), no. 1000-1002.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (All Saints Day, November 1st)

1. What does 1 John teach us about the nature of heaven?
