



By [Dale J. Sieverding](#)

This is the day we go to Church and come home dirty! Instead of fasting and doing penance in private, this day, we proclaim our penance to the world. “Did you ‘get’ your ashes?” People will ask. It may be better to ask, “Did you ‘mean’ your ashes?” This day, the Church prescribes the chanting of the Litany of the Saints, the calling down of the saints that is used for the church’s most solemn rites — baptism, ordinations, dedications, and in the giving of Viaticum to the dying. This day, the Saints are invoked as a Communion of witnesses/helpers who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, and teach us from their lives, the risks and rewards of following Jesus.

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