

## Revelation 7:13-14

“Pardon me, ma’am, but your slip is showing.” We may not hear these words much today. But some years back, they were not all that uncommon. Ladies wore a white slip underneath their dress. No one could see the slip unless it peeked out down by the hemline. But it only did that in the back where the lady could not see it herself. And so a kind gentleman, coming up to her, might point out that her slip was showing.

There is a parallel here for us. And I do realize that many of us are not ladies, and very possibly, few of you who are ladies even wear a slip anymore. But the way Revelation 7 tells it, today on this All Saints’ Day, all of us, male and female, young and old, are wearing slips. And they are white. And, now and then, our slip shows.

“*Who are these dressed in white robes?*” the elder asks St. John in our text. These are all the saints. They have come through the great tribulation. Their faith has been tested by fire, but they have come through the fire. And now they stand, a jubilant throng, for their days of suffering and mourning are over. There is no more sin, no more death. The only thing that awaits them is joy and bliss forevermore.

In heaven, no one says, “Pardon me, but your slip is showing.” Because in heaven, the white robe, the slip, is worn on the outside for all to see. “*Who are these,*” the elder asks, “*dressed in white?*” White means innocence, holiness. You have a white slip. It was given to you in your Baptism. There you were dressed by Christ with His holiness. But it’s your slip. It’s not your outer garment. The slip is worn underneath. It’s there, but we don’t see it. In heaven we will, but not here on earth.

Here God’s saints are not so obvious. King David was a saint. He had a white slip. But we see what he wore on the outside -- his adultery with Bathsheba, and his murder of her husband, Uriah. Not very white at all. Peter was a saint. He also wore a white slip. But on the outside he wore his denials of Jesus, and the many times he acted like an ignorant and sinful disciple. Paul was a saint. He, too, wore a slip. But what stands out on the outside are the deaths of all the Christians that came about by his order.

“Pardon me, but your slip is showing,” were words that surprised a woman to hear them. And they also surprise the true saints of God. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us that when He gathers His saints, His sheep together on the Last Day, He will point out to them that their slip had been showing here on earth. But they will be surprised: “*When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?*” they will respond, “*And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?*”

Such will be the words of David, Peter, and Paul, and all who are saints. True saints do not see their own slip. It peeks out from behind for others to see. We do see the holy works King David did for the Lord. We do see what Peter and Paul did that was great and honorable as apostles of Christ in love for Him. We see the white slip peeking out down by their hemline, but they are not aware of it. Rather, “*I am the chief of sinners!*” cries Paul; “*The good I want to do, I do not do;*

*but I do the evil I do not want to do!*” And all who are saints take these words for their own. The white slip is there, but saints are more aware of their sinfulness than their saintliness.

Ladies simply did not purposely point out their own slip. It was never, “Pardon me, but what do you think of my white slip peeking out?” And no saint today points out their holy works to others. We do let our light shine, but not to gain the attention and approval of others, but rather to glorify our Father in heaven. In heaven our slip is worn for all to see, but here, what people see is not that we are saints so much, but sinners.

And so our white robe is worn underneath. What color, therefore, is our outer garment? We are covered with the blackness of sin? The sin in our heart displays itself all too easily in our life. We try to hide it, but we cannot. Everything we do is tainted with sin, with rebellion against God, with selfish motives, greed, and lust.

What is the color of our outer garment? We would have to say, if we are honest, that it’s black. But close your eyes for a moment and open your ears. Listen to the elder speaking in Revelation chapter 7: “*Who are these?*” he asks...(These are the ones) “*who have washed their robes...in the blood of the Lamb.*” Friend, your outer garment is not black; it’s red. Red because Jesus shed His blood for you on a cross. Red because all your sins are washed away in that blood.

This is what makes you a saint - not because your white slip may peek out; but because, by the grace of God, all your sins are forgiven, and this you believe. With our eyes we see that our garment on the outside is black, black with sin. But by faith we believe it is red. Red, not because of anything we have done; red because of what Jesus did for you.

He took the blackness of your sin and He wore it in your place. The lust and adultery in your past -- you did not do it, not in God’s eyes; Jesus did. God covered Him with your sin. You are forgiven. Everything in your past that bothers you; all the guilt; all those glaring sins - Jesus did them, not you. He was covered with all your sins on the cross. God, dear friend, forgives you.

One day you will stand in heaven with that jubilant throng dressed in white. Your slip will be showing because it’s the only thing you will wear. But don’t look at that slip now, or you’ll never be in heaven. Look to the cross. Look to your Baptism. Look to the Sacrament on the altar. You do not get to heaven because you wear white so well. You get to heaven because you are dressed in red. You are cleansed in the blood of Christ.

It’s okay when people tell you, “Pardon me, but your slip is showing.” But this is not your doing. God’s saints “*have washed their robes...and made them white in the (red) blood of the Lamb.*” Today you are dressed in red. That’s why tomorrow you will be dressed in white. Amen.