

LECTIO DIVINA OF ALL SAINTS' DAY SUNDAY - NOV 1, 2020

Opening Prayer: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. God, our Father, source of all holiness, the work of your hands is manifest in your saints; the beauty of your truth is revealed in their faith. May we who aspire to have part in their joy be filled with the Spirit who blessed their lives, so that having shared their faith on earth we may also share their company in your kingdom. Thank you for the example of the Saints. We desire to join in their company, worshiping you forever in Heaven. Help us follow their footsteps. May your blessing be upon us that we may conform ourselves to Your image, seeking Your will in all things, as the Saints did. Help us to devote ourselves, and all that we do, to Your glory, and to the service of our neighbors. Amen.*

First Reading: A Reading from the book of Revelation 7:2-4, 7-14

I, John, saw another angel come up from the East, holding the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who were given power to damage the land and the sea, "Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand marked from every tribe of the children of Israel. After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice: Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb." All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They prostrated themselves before the throne, worshiped God, and exclaimed: "Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen." Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me, "Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?" I said to him, "My lord, you are the one who knows." He said to me, "These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."

The word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God

Reflection: The apostle John has a vision of the saints in their heavenly glory. "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (Rev 7:9). God places his own seal on his followers, identifying them as his own and guaranteeing them his protection over their souls. Today is a reminder that we are called to be a part of that vast multitude of holy ones whose

numbers are so great they cannot be counted. The number 144,000 is $12 \times 12 \times 1000$, symbolizing completeness - All God's followers will be brought safely to him; not one will be overlooked or forgotten. God seals these believers for their witnessing and courageous life on earth.

The Responsorial psalm 24: *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. *R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord? or who may stand in his holy place? One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, who desires not what is vain. *R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his savior. Such is the race that seeks him, that seeks the face of the God of Jacob. *R. Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

Reflection: Tradition says that this psalm was sung on the very first day of each week in the temple services. The people outside would call out to the temple gates to open up and from inside, the priests would ask, "who can ascend the mountain of the Lord? Or who may stand in his holy place? These questions reminded them and remind us that only those whose hands are sinless, whose hearts are clean, whose desires are pure will enter the presence of God.

Second Reading: A Reading from first letter of St. John 3:1-3

Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

The word of the Lord/ Thanks be to God

Reflection: John writes that we are now God's children. Our self-worth is based on the fact that God loves us first. Knowing that we are His children should encourage us to live as Jesus did. Our Christian life is a process of becoming more and more like Christ. This process will not be complete until we see Christ face to face and that is our ultimate destiny and for that we have to lead holy lives now.

Gospel Reading: A reading from the holy gospel according to St. Mathew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ/ Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Meditation: This gospel is known as 'beatitude' meaning 'blessed'. Each beatitude tells how to be blessed. Blessed implies the fortunate state of being in God's kingdom. It is the deepest form of happiness. The beatitudes are a code of Christian ethics for us. They speak of eternal values and not temporary. They describe what we should be like as Christ's followers. Presenting the Beatitudes on All Saints' Day, the Church reminds us that all the saints accepted the challenge of the Beatitudes to be meek and merciful, to hunger and thirst for righteousness and to work for peace. We, too, grow in holiness when we live wholesome lives of integrity, truth, justice, charity, mercy and compassion, sharing our blessings with others.

What is the objective to celebrate this feast? We have Saints as our heroes in our Liturgical Calendar. We celebrate each canonized saint on their particular feast day of the year. We also have hundreds of saints, martyrs, men, women, holy innocents and children who are not found in the list of saints and in our liturgical calendar. Among these would be perhaps our own parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters who were heroic women and men of faith. They are united with God in the heavenly glory. And therefore, All Saints' Day is intended to honor their memory. Hence All Saints' day can be called the feast of the "Unknown Saint". All baptized Christians who have lived faithfully their christian life on earth and died in Christ, are living with God in glory and they are considered saints. Historically speaking, a common commemoration of the saints, especially the martyrs, appeared in various areas throughout the Church after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313. The primary reason for establishing a common feast day was the desire to honor the great number of Christians martyred during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian (284-305)

Why do we honor the saints? 1) We honor the saints because they put their trust in Christ and lived heroic lives of faith. St. Paul asks us to serve and honor such noble souls. In his epistles to the Corinthians, Philippians and Timothy, he advises Christians

to welcome, serve and honor those who have put their trust in Jesus. The saints enjoy heavenly bliss as a reward for their faith in Jesus. Hence, they deserve our veneration. 2) The saints are our role models. They teach us theological virtues faith, hope and charity and cardinal virtues prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance by their lives. 3) The saints are our heavenly mediators who intercede for us before Jesus 4) The saints are God's instruments to work miracles in our lives just as He used the rod of Moses (Exodus), the bones of the dead (2 Kings 13:21), the towel of Paul (Acts 19:12), and the shadow of Peter (Acts 5:15), to work miracles.

What can we learn from their Lives? 1) Their lives teach us to become saints. Jesus invites us "Be holy as your heavenly father is Holy." St. Augustine asked: **Si iste et ista, cur non ego?** Meaning "**If he and she can become saints, why can't I?**"

2) They teach us how to achieve holiness through shortcut way. The three Saint Teresas remain as models for achieving sainthood through shortcut way. i) **St. Teresa of Avila:** Recharge your spiritual batteries every day by prayer, namely, listening to God and talking to Him. ii) **St. Teresa of Lisieux:** Convert every action into prayer by offering it to the glory of God and for the salvation of souls by doing God's will to the best of one's ability. iii) **St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta:** Do ordinary things with great love.

3) We are living in the archdiocese of Los Angeles "**the City of Saints**". Los Angeles means our Lady the Queen of Angels. *Plus we have cities called San Gabriel, Santa Monica, San Pedro, San Fernando, Santa Barbara, Santa Ines, San Juan Diego, San Francisco etc.* it is said that more than hundred streets have been named after saints in LA. It is not enough that we live in the city of saints. It is very important to live saintly life.

4) **Sainthood is not the privilege of a few but a duty for every Christian.** The feast of All Saints is a reminder that each one of us is called to be saints. 'Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy' is a call coming from the time of Moses. Jesus also repeated the same in his teaching. Early Christians when greeting each other addressed them as saints. Hence let us lead saintly lives and inspire others towards sainthood.

Concluding Prayer: *God, Source of all holiness, you have enriched your church with many gifts in the Saints. We thank you, Lord, for the saints you have placed on our way and who manifest your love. We ask for your pardon if we have tarnished your face in us and denied our calling to be saints. Direct our actions by holy holy inspirations and carry them on by your gracious assistance. Lord Jesus, you show us the way of the beatitudes so that we may come to that happiness, that is fullness of life and thus holiness. Dear Holy Saints of God, we join our prayers of praise to yours this day. With you, we sing of God's goodness, rejoice in God's mercy and celebrate God's incredible love. Teach us to live as you lived, always things of others, always recognizing our weaknesses, always rejoicing in God's gifts and always closely following Jesus. All you Holy Saints of God, Pray for us that we too may someday be among God's Holy ones. Blessed Mother, Queen of all Saints, Pray for us. (Hail Mary and Blessing)*