

All Saints Day

11/1/2020

J.V. Trautwein

Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“All Saints celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ. As November heralds the dying of the landscape in many northern regions, the readings and liturgy call us to remember all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. At the Lord’s Table we gather with the faithful of every time and place, trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled and that all tears will be wiped away in the new Jerusalem.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones”](#)

Psalm 34:1-10, 22

- ¹ I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and be glad.
- ³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
- ⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your^a faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!
- ⁹ O fear the Lord, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no want!
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
- 22 The Lord redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Hymn of Praise: [“You Servants of God”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Almighty God, you knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Revelation 7:9-17](#)

2nd Reading: [1 John 3:1-3](#)

The Gospel: [Matthew 5:1-12](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Oh Happy Day When We Shall Stand”](#)

The Message: ([Video Link](#))

Yesterday we celebrated the day of Halloween or All Hallows Eve, the day before what has been traditionally one of the major holy days of Christianity. All Hallows Eve begins the recognition of our mortality and almost pokes fun of death itself. This is noticeable in some of its decorations of tomb stones, ghosts, and skeletons. But Halloween ushers in a more sacred celebration of those who have experienced death and the ultimate new life – All Saints Day or as some call it All Souls Day.

The very first mention of such a Christian commemoration of the dead was as early as 373 AD. It wasn't until 609 AD that it became a day on the church calendar celebrated on May 13th. In 835 AD, Gregory IV changed the date to November 1 and has remained that date for the Roman Catholic Church and many of the protestant denominations. The Eastern Orthodox Church though celebrates it on the first Sunday after Pentecost which is closer to the original May 13th date. Although the protestant church and the Roman Catholic Church celebrate All Saints Day on the same day the meaning of the day differs. Under the influence of Martin Luther the difference relate to the theological definition of a saint.

The Roman tradition defines a saint as someone who has a special relationship with God above and beyond the average Christian. Following his or her death such a person must be examined as to their piety and miracles performed in order to be elected into sainthood by Papal decree. In the Roman tradition it is believed that these designated saints have earned a unique, special, and direct eternal relationship with God making them mediators between God and mankind. Each saint represents a particular cause or facet of life and is God's official emissary to deal with these earthly concerns. Therefore prayers are directed to the specific saint who has jurisdiction over the prayer request. For instance St. Anthony is the Saint of the lost; St Nicholas is the patron saint of bankers, seafarers and children, and so on.

Luther said that such usage and narrow definition of sainthood was not valid since it is not to be found in the Scriptures. The Scripture state that mediation between God and man was only through Jesus and the on-going revelation through the Holy Spirit. Thus Luther struck down the basic theological Roman concept of sainthood. For Luther, sainthood was for everyone who believed and lived the life in Christ. We are all baptized into sainthood and thereby to paraphrase another saying of Luther, "Sainthood of all believers."

Luther is supported by what John wrote in his first letter, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure." In this writing John makes the point that it is not a procedure of earthly standards and judgments which gives the distinction of being purified as a child of God. But, it is through the belief and hope in being one with God that we find this purity of being a child of God. In other words, sainthood is extended to all who have found hope through their belief and purity through their baptismal life in Christ. Therefore it is through Christ we are purified and meet God face to face. There are no other mediators.

Now the question is, what is this purified life? What is this life of living the image of Christ? Can you identify a saint? If so, what are the signs of sainthood? Jesus gave us these signs in His Sermon on the Mount and the beatitudes. The signs as found in the beatitudes are very obviously opposite to society's concept of the good life. What bring blessedness, reward and happiness to society is not what is blessed, happy, and rewarding to the follower of Christ, the saint.

Just listen again to Jesus' words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That is, even when one experiences the disappointments in life which may break one's spirit, the saint finds that true joy and happiness has not been destroyed for they know the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Their hope is beyond earthly disappointment. These words are especially meaningful during these troubled times when everything seems to be broken, especially normalcy.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Even the loss of a loved one cannot destroy the saint's happiness and joy for they are comforted in their belief that they too will live in that kingdom of heaven. With so many in mourning the loss of loved ones as a result of covid-19 these words bring comfort.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." The saint is one who discovers the humility in knowing themselves with all their weaknesses, needs, and inabilities. This discovery leads to the joy and happiness of knowing their true worth as an individual as well as the worth of others

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." The saint is motivated to pursue goodness, justice, honesty, and morality in their lives and knows that this

is a lifelong pursuit. In fulfilling this pursuit there is happiness and joy. We live in a time during which such righteousness is desperately needed especially in how we treat each other.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.” Sainthood is found in those who are able to forgive, have mercy and even empathy in order to love and understand one another. There is joy and happiness in realizing that God’s mercy is always extended to all of His children.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” Happiness and joy are not for those who act with selfish motives but are for those who act with sincerity and purity of motives as grounded in God’s love. This purity leads the saint to see God in his or her life.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called Children of God.” Happiness and joy will be with those who bring peace and harmony to life by breaking down barriers of inequity and injustice which bring conflict. The saint explores all avenues of peace instead of finding excuses for war, divisiveness, hatred, and turmoil. To bring peace is to be a child of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God. And blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you.” The ultimate happiness, joy, and blessedness is when the life in Christ is challenged and the temptation to turn away from one’s beliefs and to compromise is defeated even in the face of persecution. Such steadfast commitment of the saint brings the joy that there is more to life for there is the life eternal in God’s kingdom of heaven.

The beatitudes clearly spell out the difference between sainthood and those who are just kidding themselves by saying one thing and then living the dreams and goals of a pagan society. All Saints Day presents the comparison between the life in Christ and the life of earthly pursuits. All Saints Day is the celebration of all those who stand or have stood for justice, equality, love, respect and honor. Blessed, happy, and joyful are you when the beatitudes exemplify your life for you are a saint in God’s kingdom.

All Saints Day also points us to the past since it is a time to remember and honor those saints, those loved ones, who have lived a life as a witness to the gospel of Christ. In order to acknowledge their lives and what they have given us and have shared with us through our common Baptism in Christ, we will place a flower upon the water of life in remembrance of them. This is the life together that we celebrate. Amen

Anthem: [“Blest Are They”](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what-e’er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer

Comforting Father, on this All Saints day we celebrate and give thanks for all those who have been your witnesses in the past and present. We give thanks for our fellow member Al Honey who entered your loving eternal kingdom this past year. We also remember and give thanks for all those of our extended family who are now resting in your eternal peace. During this time of remembrance and celebration of life may it also be a time that we renew our commitment to be devoted witnesses of your ever present love.

During this time of extreme divisiveness within our nation may we find peace and calm within our lives. This is especially true during the days and weeks to come. Give us wisdom and compassion in all the decisions which we will be making.

We especially need your presence during the coming months as the pandemic surges throughout the world. Give us patience to follow those measures which will help to contain the spread of this deadly virus. Continue to be with all those on the front lines of helping those who have been stricken by the pandemic and the natural disasters. They are giving so much of their lives while placing themselves in danger. We continue to pray for their safety and well-being.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Chad Bittinger, Heidi Brackbill, Danny Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Kirk Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Richie Wohkittel, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["For All the Saints"](#)

All are welcome to our outdoor Sunday morning service at 9:30 AM weather permitting. Social distancing and face masks are required. Bring a lawn chair.

Bible Study with Vicar Karen Pugatch, Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30PM. More information is attached below.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org/>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291