

THE WORD OF THE LORD

Matthew 5:1-12



All Saints

1 Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. **2** Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them: **3** 'How happy are the poor in spirit: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **4** Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. **5** Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted. **6** Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. **7** Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. **8** Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God. **9** Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. **10** Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **11** Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'

Other readings: Apocalypse 7:2-4. 9-14 Psalm 23 1 John 3:1-1

The feast of All Saints gathers together in one great celebration all those who throughout history have sought for God and found God in Christ. We celebrate our belonging to the great 'communion of saints' and long to be fully united with those who have gone before us 'marked with the sign of faith'. Should not our celebration include all those who in seeking what is true and good have searched for the one, true God?

Our gospel contains the opening words of the Sermon on the Mount. In these 'beatitudes' Jesus teaches us about the values, attitudes and actions of those who truly seek God. They do not seek their own advantage. Jesus promises the rewards of the kingdom for those who live in this way.

We are born into the life of the saints, of God's holy people, through our baptism and faith in Christ. But our other two readings for this feast look forward to the future life of the saints. John reminds us in the second reading that we can have no idea what our future will be like. But, he says, 'we shall be like him'. Christians are assured that they will be brought into the very life of God.

The book of the Apocalypse, or of Revelation, with its colourful visions of the future, is perhaps best suited to help us yearn for the life of God. It shows us that this life is for the present beyond our imagining. We know of it only through visions and images. In the vision depicted here we see those who have 'been through the great persecution'. We are reminded that so many of those who follow Christ in our day still give their lives in martyrdom. That way of following Christ may not be asked of us, but self-giving after the example of Christ is.

Do I treasure my membership of the Church, the holy people of God?

Do I try to make real in my life the simplicity of the beatitudes?

We celebrate being one with our brothers and sisters in the communion of saints.

We pray for all the faithful departed that they may have the fulness of life.