

### Matthew 5: 1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In today's Gospel, Matthew gives us a summary of Jesus' teaching, in the beatitudes. From the inner circle of his chosen followers to the great crowds that have come from many parts, Jesus recognises them as blessed, from the poor in spirit, to those persecuted for their faith. This is not a belated recognition of the dead, but a joyful recognition of the living people of God.

As was expressed in the second reading, to be a Christian means to live contrary to the ways of this world. The world says success is based on wealth, but Jesus says we are to be "poor in spirit", and to detach ourselves from wealth. Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn.", those who grieve for their sins, who are moved by the affliction of others; they will surely know comfort. The world tells us to seek power, but Jesus says be "meek." Moreover, the world says honour and the approval of others is important, but Jesus says, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness." Simply put, the beatitudes are the "how to" of sainthood. So, if I want to be a saint, these are the things I need to seek and if, as I strive to align myself with the beatitudes, I find it difficult, I just remember, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven." In other words, it's all worth it in the end. Do I desire to be a saint? What steps do I need to take to become more holy?

### This Sunday's Readings:

## *ALL SAINTS*

**1<sup>st</sup> November 2020**



Today, The feast of All Saints invites us to celebrate and take pride in all those who have gone before us and in those who grace our community today. We rejoice in the saints we have known and know. We bless God for those who attend to the hungry, the orphans, the lonely, the sick, the outcasts, and the overlooked.

We thank God for those who out smiled the jibes and taunts of oppressors, for those whose whispered prayers have enriched the holiness of us all, for those who struggle honestly against ending up selfish and unloving. We express our gratitude for those whose

lives are welcomed as good news by the poor, for those who confront religious pretense, for those who keep on forgiving with an energy that is worthy of God. For all these people, among us still, we give thanks. (Denis McBride C.SS.R)

### **Opening Prayer**

*God our Father, source of all holiness, the work of your hands is manifest in your saints, the beauty of your truth is reflected in their faith. May we who aspire to have part in their joy be filled with the Spirit that blessed their lives, so that having shared their faith on earth we may also know their peace in your kingdom.*

### **Apocalypse 7: 2-4. 9-14**

Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying: "Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!" Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The book of the Apocalypse or Revelation uses symbolic imagery to paint a picture of heaven, the Apostle John's vision of heaven. First, the saints are the ones "marked with the seal", just as we are marked with the sign of the cross. Second, John saw, "a great multitude, which no one could count." This is the universal (i.e. catholic) nature of the Church. Heaven is not exclusive to any one group of people, rather, there will be people there "from every nation, race, people, and tongue." This gives us hope that there are many, many saints (more than anyone can count). Third, we learn that the saints endured "great distress" on earth and have been "washed... in the Blood of the Lamb." This teaches us that it is not easy to become a saint, it is a process of purification, which involves going against the grain of the world. and involves us joining ourselves to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross through self-giving love.

### **Psalm 23**

*The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples.  
It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm.  
Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place?  
The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things.  
He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him.  
Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob.*

### **1 John 3: 1-3**

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

John speaks lovingly here of fellow baptized Christians and teaches us about our identity. As baptized Christians, we are saints in the making. In baptism, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and become children of God. Therefore, we belong to God and are called to live accordingly. Being a child of God means living contrary to the ways of this world. In Scripture, the "world" represents everything contrary to God. It refers to the sinfulness and disfunction found all around us. We are called to be holy. This journey of sanctification begins at baptism when we are cleansed of original sin and join God's family. But that is just the beginning. The whole Christian life is about continually turning away from that which separates us from God and giving ourselves completely over to Him, no matter how difficult and challenging that may be.

### **Alleluia, Alleluia!**

*Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened,  
and I will give you rest, says the Lord*

**Alleluia!**

***Prayer over the Offerings***

*May these offerings we bring in honour of all the Saints be pleasing to you,  
O Lord, and grant that. Just as we believe the Saints to be already assured of  
immortality, so we may experience their concern for our salvation.*

***Prayer after Communion***

*As we adore you, O God, who alone are holy and wonderful in all your Saints, we  
implore your grace, so that, coming to perfect holiness in the fullness of your love, we  
may pass from this pilgrim table to the banquet of our heavenly homeland.*