

## Commentary on the Readings for Sunday, November 1, 2023

### The Feast of All Saints

Today the Church honors all the saints; those that we know and, more so, those that we don't know. Remember, everyone in heaven is a "saint." The word saint means "holy one," or one set apart who has reached the degree of holiness in order to be with God. You may recall the phrase in other scripture readings where God says, "Be holy for (or because) I am holy." Now, most of us might say, "Wow, how can anyone be as holy as God? The answer to that is: we can't on our own, but God is there to help us if we are willing to bend our ways and heart to His way. Because God is divinely perfect, He cannot abide or live with anyone who is not perfect. Therefore, everyone who is in heaven has been made perfect by the grace of God and, perhaps, a little time in Purgatory. The subject of Purgatory will be on our mind tomorrow when we honor those still in Purgatory.

The **First Reading** is from the *Book of Revelation (7:2-4, 9-14)*. This first part of this passage talks about the people in heaven being "signed" with a seal. This seal is the commitment of the Sacrament of Baptism. The Sacrament of Baptism is more than a little sprinkling of water followed by a big party. It is a serious commitment to follow Jesus Christ in His teachings and His Church. When we do this we are assured of being among the large group mentioned in the second part of the passage.

The **Responsorial Psalm** is *(24:1-6)*. This Psalm is a song sung by people entering heaven. It is a reminder of what they left behind, and what they are now about to encounter in heaven – the "mountain of the Lord" is an ancient Jewish expression for being with God in heaven. Verse 4 of this Psalm is the ultimate detail, or requirement, for entrance to heaven. We would do well to review this Psalm and to see if we are measuring up to its requirements.

The **Second Reading** is from the *First Letter of John (3:1-3)*. This is such an important part of Holy Scripture that I encourage you to read the entire chapter. It contains the essence of what it takes to get into heaven and the alternative, which is a serious matter, but again, we cannot do this on our own. God wants to help us if we ask. So, I encourage you to read this chapter again privately and then see how you measure up. It can be a real eye opener.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of Matthew (5:1-12a)*. This is the opening to the **Sermon on the Mount**, one of the most famous passages in the New Testament. And yet, do we really understand it? Often we hear familiar passages in church, and because they sound familiar we let them go over our head thinking we know all about it. But do we really? This opening, often called the Beatitudes, outlines the many benefits of those who are obedient to the teachings of Christ. Here they start out with simple works and gradually increase in depth and reward. We may not be faced with all of them, but if you look back in your life you might see where you were faced with one or more of these challenges. How did you measure up?

**All Saints Day** is a special day when we want to remember in some special way all of those who have passed away, and hope that they have reached heaven, or the New Promised Land, or the Lord's Mountain – whatever you want to call it. Being with God is the ultimate of our life – or it should be. The alternative is not that great! **MFB**