

ORDER OF SERVICE
Sunday, November 1, 2020 ~ All Saints Day
St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, OR 97355
Bishop +John S. Thornton, Presiding

A Greeting

SH'MA YSRA'EL: Hear, O Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD is One." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Leviticus 19:18)

Collect for All Saints Day. Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

Hymn #293 "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"

I sing a song of the saints of God,
patient and brave and true,
who toiled and fought and lived and died
for the Lord they loved and knew.
And one was a doctor, and one was a queen,
and one was a shepherdess on the green:
they were all of them saints of God, and I mean,
God helping, to be one too.

They loved their Lord so dear, so dear,
and God's love made them strong;
and they followed the right, for Jesus' sake,
the whole of their good lives long.
And one was a soldier, and one was a priest,
and one was slain by a fierce wild beast:
and there's not any reason, no, not the least,
why I shouldn't be one too.

They lived not only in ages past;
there are hundreds of thousands still;
the world is bright with the joyous saints
who love to do Jesus' will.
You can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea,
in church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea;
for the saints of God are just folk like me,
and I mean to be one too.

First Lesson 1 John 3:1-23

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.
Sin and the Child of God

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love ^{his} brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall ^{assure} our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

- ❖ Hear what the spirit is saying to God's People
- ❖ Thanks be to God

Psalm 34:1-10,22

- 1 I will bless the LORD at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 I will glory in the LORD; *
let the humble hear and rejoice.
- 3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the LORD; *
let us exalt his Name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.
- 5 Look upon him and be radiant, *
and let not your faces be ashamed.
- 6 I called in my affliction and the LORD heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.
- 7 The angel of the LORD encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.
- 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!
- 9 Fear the LORD, you that are his saints, *
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger, *
but those who seek the LORD lack nothing that is good.
- 22 The LORD ransoms the life of his servants, *
and none will be punished who trust in him.

Second Lesson Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"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 receive 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 for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"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 who were before you."

- ❖ Hear what the spirit is saying to God's People
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Homily: “The Wolf and the Lamb Shall Feed Together” – Bishop +John S. Thornton

Today's Gospel is the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). There are eight Beatitudes. I have good news for you: I'm not going to preach on all eight. The fifth Beatitude is “Blessed are the merciful....” I've decided to take it literally – and be merciful, by keeping my sermon short. Well, shorter than last time. It was way too long, too pedantic, too abstruse. Naturally, I thought it was very interesting. Nobody complained, of course. How can you complain to a videotape? Anyway, that's my good news: a shorter sermon.

I'm going to preach on (only) three of the eight Beatitudes, “Blessed are those who are poor,” “Blessed are those who hunger,” and “Blessed are those who mourn.” I'll actually combine those who are poor and those who are hungry.

Now you need to know that Luke also has Beatitudes, four of them, followed by four “woes,” the obverse, just to let you know that, in the Kingdom of God, everything can get turned around. (That's not “whoa” as in “Whoa, horse, whoa.” It's “woe” as in big trouble.) Woe unto you, bishops, you'll end up washing the dishes! I think the consensus among scholars is that the three Beatitudes I'm going to talk about are authentic sayings of Jesus, words right out of his mouth. That doesn't mean that all the rest aren't in the spirit of Jesus. They are, though they're the experience of the first Christians.

I'll start with “Blessed are those who mourn. The Greek word is *penthounte*. It can be translated “those who weep” or “those who are sorrowful” or “those who grieve” or “those who mourn.” Let's stick with the traditional “those who mourn.” Blessed are they.

Blessed are they? What's so blessed about mourning? Well, I'll tell you what so blessed about mourning. It means that you're not dead! It means that you have the capacity for heartbreak. “How else but through a broken heart/ May Lord Christ enter in?” wrote Oscar Wilde in “The Ballad of Reading Gaol.” How else? So let the tears cascade down your cheeks, blubber and bawl, pound your fist on the table, shake it at the heavens. You're alive, by God, like the Risen Christ! The opposite is to be a determinist, to be a fatalist, to be essentially indifferent to life and the world, hard and cold as ice and Christless – and, otherwise, no fun to be around.

Oh, and there's the promise: “you will be comforted.” I want you to know the Greek word for that: *paraklethesountai*. Say, “para.” Now say, “klethe.” Now say, “paraklethe.” See! You just did it. You just translated Greek into English. You just said the word “Paraclete.” That's what Jesus promised, the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. There's always someone who comes to us, swift and empathic...comes and comforts us...comes and makes us strong. That someone is always the Christ in disguise. We can get up and go on and make others strong too.

Now I'll combine “Blessed are you who are poor in spirit” in Matthew's Gospel – notice how Matthew softens it and makes it more inclusive, though less authentic, in my opinion – and “Blessed are you who are poor” in Luke's Gospel. That's clearer. That's blunt. The Greek word both Matthew and Luke use is *ptokoi*, plural of *ptokos*, which, in ancient times, likely

would have meant “beggar,” but it's usually translated “poor.” Let's go with “poor.”

So what's so blessed about being poor?

Let's put this in context. Jesus was a poor man. He was a laborer. He lived in a poor family, father, mother, sisters, brothers, all of them in one shelter. He lived among the poor, everybody in a rural village in Galilee. He knew that “give us this day our daily bread” meant exactly that, bread, this day, please. He knew that the people he lived among had a heart for thankfulness for the gift of necessary things, like bread – and love. But he knew that the message the world was always blaring at the poor was, We don't want to know that you exist. We never want to see you face-to-face, eye-to-eye. It would shame us, take away our pretention of God's favor. You're just a burden to the world. There has to be something about you that makes you unworthy, undeserving. And along comes this Jesus who says, Blessed, Blessed, Blessed are you who are poor.

You're the people who are closest to God's heart. Nobody ever told them that before. The religious leaders, with all their authority, had forgotten – or simply disregarded – Scripture, which made it clear that God is impartial – but with a preference for the poor. They were the people who had no idols to worship, the prime sin among the Jews, idolatry. They were the people who knew that they were utterly, utterly dependent on grace and that a loaf of bread broken among many was greater than a flock of lambs sacrificed in the Temple.

My loves, those of us who have enough must find ways to escape the trap we're in. I mean the trap that clamps our hearts. We have to ask ourselves and each other and those who claim to represent us, Does everybody have enough? Enough food? Enough clothing? Enough housing? Enough education.? Enough health care? Enough good work? It's always the urgent question, never more so than now. Since May of this year, eight million more people in the U.S. have fallen into poverty. With this chasm between us, we could never claim greatness. But I take heart. In this abnormal time, we see what's normal for human beings: the limitless capacity of generosity.

One last Greek word: *makarioi*. It can be translated “blessed” or “happy” or, as the Jesus Seminar scholars do, “congratulations.” Let's use “happy.” The most generous people are the happiest. The least generous are the unhappiest. Why not choose happiness? Why not take a fling for hilarity?

I still believe in Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 65:25): “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,/the lion shall eat straw like the ox.../they shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain.” If ever we give up on Isaiah's vision, we give up on America's future. We give up on our own.

Today, we make the choice.

In the words of our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry: "Love is the way."

Litany

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer for St. Martin's

God of Love, open our eyes and ears to perceive you at work in creation, the church, and our parish. Fill our hearts with your love that we may reach out in love to others. Stir up our imagination with your Holy Spirit that we may find new ways to live into life with you. Give us a vision of your mission that we may share your love and your spirit in all the places where we work and play and worship you. In Jesus' holy name, **Amen.**

Blessings

The Peace