



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 31st October 2021 - The Feast of All Saints

1 Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for 31st October 2021 (Matthew 5:1-12): The Beatitudes

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



3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

These eight blessings stand at the head of the Sermon on the Mount, pointing out eight ways in which we can welcome God into our lives. They are ways of living out God's blessing, possible only if the hand of God is upon us. That is why the first and the last beatitudes knit them all together with 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus came to proclaim the kingship of his Father, and these are ways of living that kingship. For each of the beatitudes, do you know someone in the parish or elsewhere in your life who exemplifies that particular attitude? Or is there a saint whom you consider typifies each of these beatitudes for you? What is your own favourite beatitude? Jesus illustrates the beatitudes in various incidents in the gospels: he enters Jerusalem on a donkey as the gentle king; he shows love in his welcome to sinners; he brings peace to those tortured by disease or contempt; he manifests purity of heart in his single-minded pre-occupation with his Father's will; finally, he accepts persecution for what he knew to be right. All Christians may suddenly find themselves face to face with similar shattering challenges.

Which of these 'beatitudes' do you most lack? Which would you most like to acquire?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †



Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 31st October 2021

First Reading: *The Martyrs in Safe Keeping*

Revelation 7:2-4. 9-14

I, John, saw another angel rising where the sun rises, carrying the seal of the living God; he called in a powerful voice to the four angels whose duty was to devastate land and sea, 'Wait before you do any damage on land or at sea or to the trees, until we have put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.' Then I heard how many were sealed: a hundred and forty-four thousand, out of all the tribes of Israel. After that I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language; they were standing in front of the throne and in front of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palms in their hands. They shouted aloud, 'Victory to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' And all the angels who were standing in a circle round the throne, surrounding the elders and the four animals, prostrated themselves before the throne, and touched the ground with their foreheads, worshipping God with these words: 'Amen. Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen.' One of the elders then spoke, and asked me, 'Do you know who these people are, dressed in white robes, and where they have come from?' I answered him, 'You can tell me, my Lord.' Then he said, 'These are the people who have been through the great persecution, and they have washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb.'

The Book of Revelation, from which this reading is taken, was written during the first persecutions of Christians. It is built on the promise that, after persecution, those who are faithful to God and to Christ will be delivered and gathered into the peace of God's presence. At the time of writing, the persecuting force from which the persecuted were to be delivered was the might of the Roman Empire, with its immorality, its materialism, its consumerism, and above all its demand that all its subjects should worship the Emperor as Lord. For Christians at that time, the late first century, the great test was whether they would accept the standards of the Empire or remain faithful to the demanding standards of Christianity. The same decision stands before Christians in today's world. Who is my Lord? Is it Christ or the standards for which the Emperor stood: carelessness about sexual morality, materialism, consumerism, putting myself first in everything without regard for the cost to others? Do I connive at and approve standards of behaviour which are built on a morality far from that of Christ? More pressingly, do I accept those standards for myself?

How far have the standards of the Caesar made inroads into Christianity and into my own life?

Second Reading: *We Shall be Like Him*

1 John 3:1-3

Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is. Surely everyone who entertains this hope must purify himself, must try to be as pure as Christ.

The second reading also contains hints of an opposition from a godless world, but concentrates much more on the union of God's children to God himself. We are already God's children, because we have been adopted in Christ and can cry 'Abba, Father!' What are the implications of this adoption to sonship? Sometimes a son is almost absurdly like his father in looks, gestures, mannerisms and ways of approaching any task. For ourselves we cannot yet fully know what this likeness to the Father will consist of, but we are promised that in the fullness of revelation we will be assimilated to God. Not only must we be close to our Father in prayer, but we must also show the qualities of God in our actions: God's generosity, his forgiveness, his openness. Part of this must be that we will find that God has developed in us all the qualities we most love and admire in others; we will be sons assimilated to their father. It will be a place of universal joy and appreciation, as all is suffused with the generosity and love of the Father. 'We shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is', and this means that the vision of God will be so overwhelming that we cannot but become like him.

What are some ways that you have experienced God's love in your life? How will you respond and best witness to Christ in our 'secular society'?

“We must show the qualities of God in our actions.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
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