

Homily (notes) from Canon Philip Dyson

Sunday 31st October 2021 - All Saints

Readings 1st: Apocalypse 7:2-4,9-14. Psalm: 23(24):1-6. 2nd: 1 John 3:1-3. Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12.

You can tell that for Christians today it is a very important celebration, for the secular world goes mad in wild extreme excess of almost opposite. For most of us when we were growing up Hallowe'en was absolutely nothing on the scale of today's money making dressing up & trick or treat.

It's the same with Christmas, which can begin in August and panic if there might not be enough of whatever the media try to make us think we **must have** to keep the feast. Very little to do with the babe in the manger.

Today we honour the ordinary holy men and women who have touched our lives for good. They tried to give and show us beautiful attitudes that flow from the gospel values Jesus lays before us in his teaching.

How our world would be transformed if everyone did have beautiful attitudes. Modern technology, may be a great thing, but we cannot be unaware, esp. for our young people of the sometimes very dangerous and destructive attitudes and worse shown to one another on facebook etc. As with much of life, it's loss & gain, good & bad.

Jesus tells us new things about our human existence: a blueprint for Christian living. They give a colourful description of what is possible for a person when they experience the love of God in the way Jesus does.

If we look more closely, we see that Jesus does not place each beatitude within the same timeframe. The gentle, the mourners, the pure in heart, the peacemakers will be rewarded in the **future**. (Notice it says peace-makers, not just peace-lovers)

Jesus says the kingdom of heaven **already** belongs to the poor in spirit and those persecuted in the cause of right. The poor in spirit know that none of us has yet reached our fulfilment. They know that we cannot just sit down, because too much remains to be done. While we might have all we need –

and often much more – others simply do not have enough. That means we have to work in the cause of justice and righteousness breaking through all the structures, barriers, customs and laws that hinder justice.

The poor in spirit are the ones who are interested in that true justice. There is always work on these to be done. The reward will come. **Heaven**.

The Saints are our brothers and sisters in Christ, who have left us an example, so that their '**light**' continues to illuminate the darkness of ignorance, confusion, doubt or despair in life today.

The memories of what they taught and inspired us to do remain as markers as we complete our own pilgrim journeys to God.

Heaven is our spiritual home and home is where the family lives, in this case the family of God. It is why we so often hear at our funerals the words of Jesus; 'In my Father house are many rooms, and I go to prepare a place for you, and take you to myself.'

Death is not the end: we are always alive to God. All Souls day follows. **St Teresa of Calcutta** often said, 'We aren't called to be successful; rather God calls each of us to be faithful.'

The saints were sinners, as are we all, but who never give up and never quit on God. They persevered. They never stopped trying to do and be better; to live those beautiful attitudes Jesus sets before us.

Where they have gone, we hope to follow.

Canon Philip Dyson

Holy Family Parish www.penzancecatholicchurch.org