

Rev. George Arceneaux

11/05/2023

All Saints' Day

Getting into today, I wondered why for all the Gospel readings we might get for All Saints' day, we have the beatitudes. And taking in mind the final line from our Revelation reading that is often used in funeral service, "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" it seems as though the reading wants us to think of those who have gone to greater glory and that they're in a better place.

And while this interpretation is certainly fine, even downright **good** it's not what I'm thinking about today. I'm not thinking about those who I have loved who have died and that they may be in a better place. And I don't mean that to say you shouldn't if that moves you. But this morning, I find myself thinking, because of the Gospel, those times when I have been poor in spirit. When I have mourned, when I have felt the need to be meek and hungry for justice or reviled. And I'm thinking of those people who have met me in those hard places and brought me some light I needed. I hope you can think of such people as well as I'm up here preaching, and consider how they may make this reading from the Gospel not about a future place of restful paradise, of hope for the future. But instead a message about what we can do and who we can be.

Today is a day to honor the saints, living and dead, known and unknown, **ESPECIALLY** the unknown.

Those people who teach us to be loving, kind, humorous, brave, humble, and willing to be wrong.

Today's a day when we get to remember the people who have served as the models of who we want to be and who modelled those virtues by being there for us. Today, I'm not just thinking about one person.

I'm thinking about my babysitter John who made me feel so cool because he was in high school and taught me how to play video games when I was 5, the older woman Miss Brignak down the block who

welcomed me when I was lost in my neighborhood as a toddler when I knocked on her door, and Sunshine my first kitten who made me feel so loved. All the above and more I remember, yes because I miss them dearly and what a wonderful thing that we make such a space in church every year for grief, but I remember them because in Jesus' beatitudes I don't just hear a message of hope. I hear a call to action that so many who have been there for me have answered.

As Jesus says that the poor in spirit are blessed and theirs is the kingdom of heaven, I hear him not merely stating a fact. I hear him saying well come heck or high water that kingdom of heaven is going to be there for the poor in spirit. I hear Jesus saying those who mourn will be comforted because *He* will comfort them, *he* will help the meek inherit the earth, he will show those hungry for justice that they will be filled, he will dispense mercy, he will show forth God, he will remind us all that we are all children of God. And Jesus doesn't just do this. John my baby sitter, and Mrs. Brignak my neighbor, and Sunshine my kitten all made met me when I needed them and lived into the love of our Gospel today. And I would bet that others modelled the call of the beatitudes for you too. Those people who were older than you who made you feel welcome, those folks who helped those in need who you wanted to be like. And the amazing thing about All Saints Day, the amazing thing about the beatitudes, the amazing thing about living this Christian life we live, we get to do the same. Just as we've all been poor in spirit or mournful or hurt, we have all been and can be like those we remember to day. We can be just like them.

I hope you can reflect on how you are like those you love and remember. Because you are. Pat and Joey Egan came by on Halloween night with sandwiches for those of us who handed out candy, and I wonder who taught them that kindness, there's a 4 year old named Simon who gave the text book definition of the word compromise at Wiggle Worship couple week ago and I wonder who has modelled that virtue for him.

As you go out today, remember what those who have gone before you have taught you, what they showed you, and know that you can be just like them, can love just like them. Remember that we can all strive to be saints too.