

HOMILY FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS 3 11/01/2020

Today is the Feast of All Saints. This feast celebrates the lives of holy people who will never be canonized that is officially be declared saints, but whom we believe share the joys of heaven with Jesus and Mary.

One of the joys of being a priest for so many years and in a number of different parishes of the Archdiocese of NY is to have known and worked with so many holy people who tried not only to keep the commandments but went out of their way to bring the love of God to their family and neighbors. These were simple people of faith whose goodness showed in their actions. For example I remember a high school girl, all on her own, who organized a soup collection on a Super Bowl Sunday and these soups were to be added to the local food pantry. Or a high school boy who again. all on his own, raised money for Easter baskets for children sick in the local hospital.

I especially think of a good friend whose daughter worked in the rectory on the weekends answering the phone. One day she told me her father was going into the hospital because he had a lot of pain. I visited him in the hospital a number of times and I was with him the day his doctor told him he had lung cancer and it was stage four which meant he was critically ill with a limited time to live. Soon after this I was transferred to another parish but his daughter called me a few weeks later and said that her dad was dying and asked if I could see him that very day. I immediately drove over to see him and went up to his bedroom where he was quietly resting. He asked me if I would join him in a drink. I said what are you drinking and he said Maalax, a stomach soothing medicine, but he said you can have a scotch. He told me he was ready to meet his Lord and Savior. He died a few hours later.

Today's readings are chosen especially for this feast. From the Book of Revelations we read that those marked with the seal of Christ from all the tribes of Israel and others from every nation will enjoy the happiness of heaven. The reading from St. John's Epistle are words of comfort. They tell us we are God's children now and what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed but we shall be like God for we shall see God as He is.

The Gospel of St. Matthew gives us the path to heaven. The Eight Beatitudes. These beatitudes offer us promise and consolation. The first half of each beatitude depicts our present state and the second half foretells the future. We are called to be poor in spirit, if we mourn we will be comforted, meek we shall inherit the earth, hungry and thirsty for righteousness we shall be satisfied, if we show mercy we will be shown mercy, clean of heart we shall see God, peacemakers we will be called children of God, if we are persecuted for righteousness, insulted or falsely accused be glad for our reward will be great in heaven.

Yes, today we honor the saints in heaven with the little "s" those whose love and holiness told us they were truly saints.