

Lectionary Faith-Sharing Community
SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

Cycle A – November 1, 2020



OPENING PRAYER

Leader: *I love you, O Lord, my strength,*

All: **O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.**

Leader: *My God, my rock of refuge,
my shield, the source of my salvation, my stronghold!*

All: **I exclaim “praised be the Lord” and I am safe
from my enemies.**

Leader: *Let us invoke the presence of God:*

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth
your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.
O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit have
instructed the hearts of the faithful grant that by
the same Spirit we may truly wise and ever enjoy
His consolations.**

First Reading [Revelation 7 (2-4),(9-14)]

I, John, saw another angel come up from the East, holding the seal of the living God. He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels who were given power to damage the land and the sea, “Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.” I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal, one hundred and forty-four thousand marked from every tribe of the children of Israel. After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.

They cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb.” All the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They prostrated themselves before the throne, worshiped God, and exclaimed: “Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me, “Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?”

I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.”

He said to me,

“These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”

Few books of the Bible have been so cited, so read, and so misinterpreted throughout the centuries as the Book of Revelation. It is a work presented as vision, prophecy, and testimony.

In this passage it is convenient to highlight the meaning of the following symbols: (a) The angel that rises from the East. The East is the side where the light comes from. It corresponds to the angel who is the bearer of salvation. (b) The seal of the living God. The seal indicated ownership. That is why those preserved by the seal are considered to be God's special patrimony. In ancient times, not only animals were marked, but slaves and soldiers. Thus they carried in their flesh the sign of belonging to their owner but also a guarantee of protection. (c) The number of the saved is a symbolic number. It indicates the totality of the saved, it is the whole Church. It is made up of people of all nations, races, peoples, and languages. (d) Liturgical assembly. Standing, dressed in long robes, with palms in the hands. The description can be interpreted in relation to the Feast of Tabernacles in use in the Jewish

liturgy. This feast was like a promise and an anticipation of the ideal Israel to be restored by God. Thus the future glory of God's people is prepared. It is the vision of Israel coming together, the perfect Israel spread throughout the universe. It is the Church made up of men who come from all nations.

(1) Read again and share your thoughts about this Reading.

Second Reading [1 John 3 (1-3)]

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

The second part of the first letter of Saint John opens with the message that we are all children of God. This message is followed by a requirement: we must live as children of God. Divine sonship is the work of the Father's love. If God loves men so much that he gives them his own Son, it is to give them eternal life, to make them children of God.

The whole Christian life should tend to show that we are children of God and that we love as He has loved. Our current life is now lived in the midst of difficulties and we are not capable to see in its entirety the great love that the Father has for us. But we maintain the firm hope that one day it will manifest.

(1) Read again and share your thoughts about this Reading.

Gospel [Matthew 5 (1-12)]

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

The beatitudes are not properly a teaching but a statement. Jesus declares blessed all those who find themselves in the following situations: voluntary poverty, non-violence, mourning, longing for justice, helping others, seeking peace and, finally, persecution because of the justice or by following Jesus.

The people that Jesus declares happy are all active and committed to seeking a different order of things than usual. To all of them Jesus opens a future and a hope: the future and the hope that have their origin in the order of things that God has devised, for the happiness of all his children.

We are before a great text because it shows us the Divine Master not preaching doctrine, but having a word of encouragement for all those who have the courage to do something for others and to work for changing the existing order. All of them are in line with what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. You are a disciple of Jesus only to the extent that you do something for others and change the existing order.

(1) Read again and share your thoughts about this Reading.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord of the day and night, of the beginning and of the end: At the closing of this meeting, once again we lift up our hearts to You, divine source of all life.*

All: **We thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on us. We thank you for the love expressed in companionship and understanding, mutual respect and shared ideas. We give you thanks for your holy power that will help us in our concerns that we have shared. For these and all the gifts that come from You, we give you thanks.**

Leader: *Lord hear our prayers* (attendees may propose their own petitions to God)

All: **In the same way in which we have being blessed by your presence as we met, we ask now to bless our safe return to our homes. May your holy blessing be over us + in the name of the Father and of the Son**

Leader: *May the King of the eternal glory gather us together in His heavenly banquet. Amen.*

Deacon José Moronta DeaconJMoronta@stmarktampa.org

