

November 1, 2015 – All Saints Day
PTP on the Threes – Striving for Sainthood

The days are getting shorter.

Currently sunrise is 7:00am and sunset is 5:30pm.

That's only 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours of daylight each day.

And it keeps getting shorter - down to just 9 hours and 10 minutes of daylight each day right before Christmas.

Halloween: ghosts, goblins, and even zombies.

How fitting for these shorter days and longer dark, dark nights!

Halloween is simply a short term for "all hallows evening", that is the day before we celebrate All Saints Day.

On November 2nd, Monday, we celebrate All Souls Day, the day we pray for all the saints who have died but have not yet quite made it to heaven.

These longer nights and the thoughts of death and end times are echoed in the Church's liturgies from now until almost Christmas.

Today's first reading is from the Book of Revelation, a book that is written somewhat in code so the ruthless rulers, the Romans, would not be able to grasp what was written.

Today's particular reading describes the end times where many people are gathered in heaven.

Did you know that God is waiting there ... just for you?

Yes, you and you and you and me.

Think of it this way for a moment.

There's an empty chair for you. [put chair up front with "Your Name" sign on it]

It has YOUR NAME on it in technicolor!

From time immemorial God has had each of us in his plan.

God has loved us and wants us to be there in heaven ... each of us!

St. Paul in his letters to the Ephesians and to the Romans tells us about those expectations ... he refers to it as "our destiny", the place we should end up.

Sometimes the word "predestination" is used since God has had the plan for our destiny before we were even born!

And we should have those expectations.

After all, as St. John tells us in today's second reading:

"See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God."

And, doesn't every parent want the very, very best for their children?

Today's psalm, Ps 24, puts it so simply:

"Lord, this is the people who longs to see your face."

In our crazy, crazy, hectic, hectic world it is so comforting to hear the words of the Alleluia: **"Come to me all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest, says the Lord."**

What better place to get all the rest we need ... yes, in heaven!

OK, I am motivated ... now just how do I get there?

Jesus lays out some excellent directions for our lives in today's Gospel.

Jesus addresses:

- Suffering
- Working for others
- Enduring persecution

The first four beatitudes address suffering that we can expect here in our lives: poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst.

Jesus assures us that he knows and cares, that he will bless us, and that he loves us.

Jesus also assures us that he is noticing when we are working for others - being merciful to others, being clean of heart in dealing with others and being peacemakers to reduce the stress in others.

Pope Francis has concentrated on our being merciful and soon we will start a whole year learning to be merciful and actually exercising mercy in our daily lives.

In the last Beatitudes, Jesus also assures us that he is with us as we perform these good deeds ... and some parts of society laugh at us, tease us, bully us, and even persecute us.

He promises us the joy of being in heaven with him and all the saints.

Well, are we ready to show mercy, be peacemakers, be meek and hunger and thirst for righteousness?

If we are doing some of those things already, how do we step up to even more?

I am guessing that we all need a little boost to take on those challenges - and then we can take on more of them.

For me, to get a boost, I am going to try the "PTP on the Threes".

The What?

This is a proposal that we acknowledge God in our lives several times a day, more specifically, every three hours.

So, the idea would be to pray at 9am, noon, 3pm, 6pm and 9pm.

If you are awake at midnight, 3am or 6 am you could pray at those times as well.

What would we pray?

I am proposing PTP - praise, thanksgiving and petition.

[Ushers will now pass out note cards on PTP on the Threes]

For instance, for a prayer of praise we could say things like:

"Lord our God, you are truly awesome!"

"Lord, your handiwork is so beautiful!"

"Lord, I feel so humble in your presence!"

We could even sing:

"Praise him, praise him, praise him in the morning, praise him in the noontime.

Praise him, praise him, praise him when the sun goes down."

Or maybe you can recall the song:

***Our God is an awesome God; He reigns from heaven above
With wisdom, power, and love; Our God is an awesome God.***

For a prayer of thanksgiving we could say:

"Lord, thank you for my very existence!"

"Lord, our God, thank you for today's blessings."

We could sing:

"Thank you Lord; thank you Lord; thank you Lord; I just want to thank you Lord"

Prayers of petition are probably the easiest prayers, coming right from our hearts.

"Lord, my uncle is really sick; please help my uncle and his family."

"Lord, please be with me today as I try to work with Sam to solve his drinking problem."

The Lord's Prayer fits right in there since one of its lines is:

"Give us today our daily bread."

That's it: prayers of: Praise - Thanksgiving - Petition - every three hours.

Perhaps, just perhaps, those prayers will help us get through our next three hours of trying to live out the Beatitudes!

Blessings on your "PTP on the Threes".

Blessings on all your efforts to live out the Beatitudes!