

.ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)

SUNDAY 01 NOVEMBER 2020

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (YEAR A)

**READINGS: REVELATION 7:9-17//PSALM 34:1-10, 22 // 1JOHN3:1-3//
MATTHEW5:1-12**

ALL SAINTS DAY

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Gracious Lord you have built up your Church through the love and devotion of your saints, help us to follow in the steps of your servants and fill our hearts with love for you and others for your sake, through Jesus Christ our Lord
AMEN

Today we celebrates **All Saints Day**, which marks the start of what is known as the Kingdom Season, the weeks leading up to Advent which starts on the 29 November.

Why do we celebrate **All Saints Day**?

On All Saints Day we give thanks for all the Saints, the Holy Ones of God. It is a day on which we remember those who have gone before us in the faith and who now have found happiness in the eternal Kingdom promised to us by God.

The history of the Christian Church is full of people who witnessed to Christ in their lives and sometimes in their death. Many of the early Christian saints were martyrs. They died for their faith in Christ, therefore the Church honour their memory and their witness with special days of celebration and prayer

The Church also have a tradition that the saints in heaven continue to intercede and pray for us and also that Christians can approach the saints to ask for their prayer and help and strength in particular circumstances.

So on all Saints Day we give thanks to the lives of many faithful Christians who have gone before us, the communion of Saints through the ages. We receive encouragement from their example of faithfulness.

Now what or who is a saint?

Some of us think that saints are these stained glass figures high up in our windows far from reality and the struggles and agonies of life on the ground Or saints are floating in a contemplative trance drifting about in a cloud of glory and do not have to face the problems and struggles we do.

St John in his revelation shares with us in his vision several glimpse of heaven and what the life of the saint is like there

Today's reading from Revelation 7:2-4 and 9: 12 is one of that glimpses. In this glimpse we see that in heaven there is a multitude that no one can count, a multitude from every nation, tribe, people and language on earth and that this multitude stands before the throne of God and before the lamb and loudly proclaim God's praise saying

“Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. And we see to, clustered around the throne of God the elders and the four creatures of God and they like the multitude praise God saying Praise and Glory and thanks and honour and praise and power and strength be to our God forever and forever Amen Amen”

And in v 13 we read one of the elders turned to John and said ***“who are these clothed in white robes and where did they come from?”*** John turned the question back to the elder and said Sir you know. And the elder said ***“These are those who have come out of the great tribulation, they have washed their robes and made them pure in the blood of the lamb*** (Revelation 7:13-14)

These were the Christians who had been faithful to God in times of trouble. These are the faces of the brothers and sisters who had given their lives in service of God. These are in fact all the saints.

The list of Saints includes very notable and important people. People like the Apostles, men and women like St Francis of Assisi and Teresa of Avilla.

But my brothers and sisters the list of Saints that are part of the multitude includes not only these famous people (***or whose names are in the saints and Seasons that we celebrate***), nor just it only include the bishop, pope and priest because of their deep faith and impressive works.

No my dear friends the lists of saints includes all those who love God and who strife to love their neighbour as themselves.

It includes all those who is different, someone who because of how they loved God and lead their life—who is worth imitating

A small boy was walking through a Cathedral on a sunny day looking up at all the massive and very beautiful stained glass windows. He asked someone who the figures in the windows were and he was told. Those are pictures of the saints. The boy went home and said to his family “***I learned what a saint is it is a person through who the light shines***”

Saints are not perfect people. Even the most famous saints were not perfect. St Peter was inconsistent, St Paul at times seemed a little arrogant, and St John and St James wanted honour and glory.

All saints as the expression goes had feet of clay but they had something worth imitating (not forceful) something worth remembering.

Saints are people who makes a difference to others because they attempted to love and serve God’s people. That is what being a saint all is about. Making a difference, a positive difference, a loving difference, the kind of difference that inclines the hearts and minds of others to want to serve God and praise him.

Tomorrow we celebrate “***All Souls Day (The commemoration of the faithful departed)*** and we remember our own personal saints (whose names are not in Saint and seasons), they are people who by their action and words revealed the love of God to us.

They are people who before they went to heaven strived in their own special way to be faithful and in their faithfulness they touched our lives and gave us a special gift—a gift of love a gift of wisdom.

Many of these personal saints would be our parents, grandparents, mentors, teachers, and priest

Their names may not be recorded in Saints and Seasons but we have our own special days that we commemorate and celebrate them (their birthdays or days like today and say thank you for the meaningful roles they played in our live)

Who do you remember today?

Who showed you a bit of what God is like?

Who made a difference in your life?

Who would you imitate?

We can take strength from the saints who are gathered around God's throne, and in that strength as the church has always intended by naming the Saints we can then go forth to imitate them and become like them

In our Gospel reading Matthew 5:1-12 known as the Beatitudes Jesus gives a description of what it means to be a Saint.

The qualities Jesus describes here gives us a picture of the character of the true people of God those who are part of his kingdom and have the full blessings of the kingdom to look forward too. It gives the picture of a true Saint.

The beatitudes propose to us a way of life inviting us to identify with the poor, those who mourn, the meek and those who hunger and thirst after justice. It challenge us to be sympathetic, to the misery and pain of others.

It challenge us to be compassionate people to be men and women who are pure in heart and to become the peacemakers in our dealings with one another, in our families in our communities and especially in our church even when this approach exposes us to ridicule and persecution.

It Challenge us to be considerate, tolerant, humble, gentle and understanding and don't force ours way upon others

At the age of 13, Jordan van der Walt started a campaign to feed hungry children. Spice4Life reported his "Just One Bag" campaign managed to gather more than 100 tons of maize meal, which fed around one million children Jordan's campaign saw 50 000 pupils from over 50 schools donate bags on maize meal.

Dario Gouveia was the first ever SPAR Hero of the Week. His initiate to collect shoes for children in need. Gouveia started his campaign after he saw a child on the street without shoes and sore looking feet. Since the beginning of his campaign 'Sole2Sole' until February 2017, he collected over 6000 pairs of shoes. And, he has not stopped there. His initiative also inspired others to do similar projects.

As the lockdown sank its teeth into Khayelitsha, Sandra Tshisa, a resident since 2004, noticed children in her street going hungry. There were already soup kitchens and other food schemes in the township, but the need was just too

great to get to everyone. So she started to cook for these children on the two-plate stove in her small house, feeding up to 30 kids on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Another 'lockdown hero' is Likaya Mqukuse. Along with some of his friends, he's been putting together food parcels for CPUT students who've been unable to return home for lockdown.

CONCLUSION

In an old Chinese story a wise teacher asks his students to identify the most satisfying thing in life. There were many good answers given such as a happy marriage “good health” and “close friends” But the sage said that they all had failed to give the correct answer. The most satisfying thing in life he said “is to see a child confidently walk down the road on his own after you have shown him the way to go.