

“For all the saints who from their labors rest. To thee, by faith before the world confessed thy name o Jesus, be forever blessed. Alleluia. Alleluia.”

Sine Nomine verse 1, Hymnal 1982

We have a lot going on in our world, our nation, our state and in our own homes right now. It's been a very difficult year, and with the election right around the corner we have a lot on our minds.

But let's put that all aside for a little while this morning. Take a deep breath. It is All Saints Day. Let's be glad today. Let's be thankful and inspired today. What can we be glad and thankful and inspired today about? The saints of our lives. This is the one day in the church year when we purposefully think about what God's saints and our own saints, taught us, gave us, meant to us.

Even if we only remember a little snippet of what that person we loved said or did in **their** lives, they undoubtedly shaped **our** lives. Did we inherit their facial expressions, do we remember a phrase they always used that we use now too. My Nana always used to sing, “You take the high road and I'll take the low road and I'll be in Dublin a'fore ye...” Gosh, I hadn't thought about that in a long time. And yes, the song is really supposed to be about Loch Lomond, but my Nana sang it about Dublin. Things like that we bury deep in our brains under the weight of all the usual worries of the day.

Today is the day to dig up all those little nuggets of joy and remember the inspiration we have been given and the wisdom that has been imparted to us...and the love.

By the way, please be sure this morning that you watch the video to the end because we have quite a few pictures of our loved ones that people have sent in and that Christine has graciously added to the video as she plays the postlude. We also have a rather long list of people who we are remembering this morning with our All Saints memorial flowers. You'll see that a little later on in our Sunday video as well.

So, then, you might be curious as to why we are hearing a portion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus telling us the Beatitudes on All Saints Day. Well, it's because of the blessedness of the people.

What was it like there to be with Jesus on an afternoon or early evening after work. He attracted people from far and near to come to hear him on a hill above the Sea of Galilee. The actions of Jesus attracted the people. He healed the sick and paid attention to the poor and suffering. That's why people came to hear what he had to say.

I noted the weather in the Galilee region today. The temperature today was at a high of about 80 degrees and sunny there. A warm sunny day would have given way to a lovely balmy evening possibly. Maybe it was like that 2000 years ago when people gathered to relax on the hillside in the golden grass and hear a holy man tell them things they had never heard before. Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are the merciful. This was strange.

That's not at all what the political rulers said. They said blessed are the rich. Blessed are the powerful. Blessed are the warriors who win battles. That was the prevailing belief system. Isn't it still in many ways?

Once again, Jesus is turning the world upside down. It's not the rich that are blessed, it is the poor. It is not the proud who know it all and have a wonderful life ahead of them, it is the humble. It is **you**; Jesus says. **You** are the blessed ones of God. Blessed are **you** if you are persecuted for being poor or humble or seeking peace instead of war.

And that's what we value about those that we honor today on All Saints Day. Think about your dear ones. What did you admire about them and learn from them; honesty, trust, humility? All those virtues and more; the virtues that Jesus taught.

Light a candle for that person or persons. Give thanks for their lives. Enjoy today surrounded by their blessing and God's blessing on you.

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through gates of pearl streams in the countless host, singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Alleluia, alleluia!"

Sine Nomine, verse 8 Hymnal 1982

And now you will hear a stewardship minute from vestry member Barry Anderson.