

## **11/01/15 ..... All Saints**

*I believe in ...the communion of saints.*

-- Each time we pray the Apostles' Creed, we profess this belief. We trust that we are united with those who have gone before us and are now in heaven, and those still being purified so they can see God face to face.

-- This feast celebrates our connection to the countless number of those who've triumphed over evil, spoken of in our first reading from Revelation. So it's an appropriate time to remember the members of our own parish who have left this earthly life in the past year.

-- Those of you who are their loved ones know your ties to them did not end with their deaths. But they are still united to all of us. Whether or not they've had to go through the purification we call Purgatory, we celebrate their happiness in heaven (for where they are, there is not time as we measure it).

-- St. Paul called the believers he wrote to saints at the beginning of many of his letters. That was even true when he chastised them for some of their behavior. They were still set apart as God's holy ones. And so are we, by our Baptism, as imperfect as we are.

-- Essentially, this feast calls us to become who we are already, God's holy ones. And our gospel today gives us what we might call a handbook for how we live as saints in God's kingdom.

-- My retreat a couple of weeks ago centered on the Sermon on the Mount. Fr. Eugene, our director, spent quite a bit of time reflecting on these first twelve verses we commonly call the Beatitudes.

-- He did so because the rest of the Sermon on the Mount flows from them. They are the "introduction to the handbook" which sets the tone for the rest of the book, so to speak.

-- And they are not impossible ideals. Of course, they seem to contradict the wisdom of the world. No politician will produce a platform telling us

to be lowly, dependent, powerless (meek), persecuted. He or she may promote peace, but it will be peace through strength, not powerlessness.

-- But God's kingdom is built on the realization that we are totally dependent on God. That is the meaning of being poor in spirit, which is the key to the other Beatitudes.

-- God's kingdom is not built on status and power, other than the power of God Himself. God's kingdom involves accepting loss. God's kingdom seeks justice, but not that type of "justice" which involves revenge.

-- God's kingdom calls us to be authentically who we are, and not some fake image of ourselves. That is what it means to be pure in heart.

-- We could spend hours reflecting on these Beatitudes. In a nutshell, they call us to admit who we are before God and follow him and his Son Jesus in purity of heart. We are to become who we are, saints of God.

-- Those we remember, personally or through the memory of others in history, have shown us that way. They were not perfect, but they strove to follow the Lord as his disciples.

-- We are united to them, and we remember them today. But our remembrance is not mere nostalgia. It is a call to imitate what was best in them while we attempt to follow the Lord in the concrete circumstances of our lives.

-- In the end, we are radically dependent on God's grace. The saints knew that as they lived their lives. May we seek God's grace with a humble heart, confident that God will supply all that we need to share fully with him in eternal life.