

ALL SAINTS DAY 2015

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER JOHN ALTBERG

HYMN 243 REVELATION 7.2

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A HUGE CROWD OF SAINTS SURROUNDS US...SO TEACHES THE READING FROM REVELATIONS FOR TODAY'S EPISTLE AND THE WORDS WE JUST SANG. WE CAN MEET SAINTS IN SCHOOL, WHILE TRAVELLING, GOING TO CHURCH, SHOPPING, HAVING COFFEE, WALKING ON THE STREET, VIRTUALLY ANYWHERE...

THE SAINTS OF GOD ARE JUST FOLK LIKE ME...BY THE WAY...WE ASPIRE TO JOIN THAT GROUP...!

Seriously...?...you must be kidding... No, I am absolutely serious.

All Saints Day is the perfect invitation for a serious discussion about the seriousness of this very matter...it is not unlike Moses' response to God's calling "*I want you, Moses, to take a leadership role...ME...?*" not qualified...get my brother Aaron...he speaks well...he'd be perfect. *Well we're not here to talk about Aaron...YOU can do this...!*

That settled, let's face another 'escape myth'...The Hymns – songs of the Church – are NOT fairy tales set to song. Like Holy Scripture - *written for our learning* [on which hymns are based] – hymns teach us and call us to put our learning into action...perhaps the analogies *dance to the tune* or *walk the talk* clarify the matter...!

It's natural and altogether easy to visualize the entire collection of known saints...those with their own day, their own statue, their own symbol, their own fame...they lived long ago. There is nothing **incorrect** about that statement. But there is more...**ALL SAINTS** is about ALL who respond, past and present, to God's invitation...that includes each of us

How DOES one become one of the Saints of God...? Like Moses, we erroneously avoid considering the possibility...the requirements seem obscure, those the Church identifies were famous, performed incredible feats...and they are all dead! That's all true...but consider more fully the hymn..."*There are hundreds of thousands still...and I mean to be one too..."Me"...?* You must be crazy...I could never qualify. Oh yes you do...we ALL do...we simply must

act upon that which we are called to do...

Assuredly, All Saints Day is about many whose deeds are known...those with their own day, their own statue, their own published story, perhaps even their own hymn! But All Saints Day is particularly about those whose identity may remain forever unknown...soldiers known only to God.

This hymn teaches that Saints are plain, common ordinary people we meet every day...people just like us...fame and fortune are neither defining nor determining qualities. Over the years I have cited a few...Blind Sam, Leo Pratt and a few others...you will find none of the in *Who's Who* or in *Butler's Lives of the Saints* but you will find their presence and deeds inscribed on the hearts of those who observed and took time to know of their compelling humility and quiet contributions.

All Saints is a major event in Catholic Christendom because it is about people we have actually known, crowds we've been in...the lesson for the Epistle..."*I LOOKED, AND THERE WAS AN ENORMOUS CROWD-NO ONE COULD COUNT ALL THE PEOPLE! THEY WERE FROM EVERY RACE, TRIBE, NATION AND LANGUAGE...*"(Rev 7.9) these are the Saints of God...it's the 'heaven crowd'...we are invited to be a part!

ALL SAINTS...those who said "yes" to their baptismal vows. They are the model to which we can aspire...to be like them. Is perfection a requirement...no...everyone has made mistakes... even Mother Theresa! Being a saint does NOT mean a life of perfection. It means a life of willing correction...accepting God's invitation.

Who are they? Words on an oft-quoted plaque..."*The Saints of God are those who went quietly about doing what God asked, asked nothing in return, and did not complain.*"

We meet Saints everywhere...particularly on seemingly obscure main street...and we are called to look for them in the mirror as well...! We ARE called to be the Holy People of God wants us to be. Think about those we know who seem to "fit the mold" What's our plan to be like them...?

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