

## ALL SAINTS' DAY/XX TRINITY 2017

### SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

#### *HYMN 243*



We meet them in church...at the store...at the office...at lunch...on trains and buses...we meet the Saints of God anywhere...they are just like us...and we want to be just like them.

*I Sing a Song of the Saints of God* was written in 1929 by Lesbia Scott especially for her children. It tells the story about the Saints of God in words even adults can understand...and it's a fun hymn to sing! Saints of God are everywhere...we just have to take the time to look!

The English word *saint* comes from the Latin *sanctus*...translated from the Greek *hagios*...meaning *to set apart* or *to make holy*. Sainthood is not something we can buy or earn...it is a gift from God. He makes us Saints by the power of the Holy Spirit...we get Sainthood at our baptism.

We often think of saints as only those Christians from long ago with the honorific Saint...capital "S"...before their names...like Peter and Andrew...James and John the "Thunder" brothers...the Blessed Mother who said "Yes" to being the *Theotokos*, the *God Bearer*...or our own Patron Saint Joseph...who quietly supported Mary and Jesus.

There are other Saints of God we talk about...Francis of Assisi who loved animals and encouraged us to take care of them and our environment...Saint Junipero Serra, himself a Franciscan friar, travelled the El Camino Real founding missions and spreading the Good News about Jesus.

There are more recent Saints of God we can learn much from...Saint John Paul II who told us to be courageous and not to be afraid and to not give up hope even during times of adversity...Saint Teresa of Calcutta who dedicated her life to helping the poorest of the poor...Saint Damien of Molokai who worked with lepers and died from the disease.

All Saints' Day is about remembering the lives of the Saints of God from long ago and from more recent times...and All Saints' Day is about us. All of those millions of Saints of

God who lived long ago and live today are just folk like us...and we want to be just like them too.

The hymn we just sang is without a doubt the best All Saints' Day sermon ever written. It tells the story of what it means to be a Saint of God...ordinary folk like us who go about doing God's work...patient and brave and true...doing what is right and good...made strong by Jesus' love...spreading his love to others.

This year All Saints' Day takes on a deeply personal meaning for all of us...we remember another Saint of God who dedicated his life to serving others...our beloved late Rector, Father John Altberg. He had a special love for All Saints' Day...and often shared stories about people he met who simply did their work without calling attention to themselves.

There are those many Saints of God who have helped shape our lives and made us who we are today...our parents and grandparents...teachers...priests and nuns...employers and coworkers...doctors and nurses...police officers and firefighters...our family and friends...those who protect us and keep us safe from harm...and all of us here today. They are the Saints of God like us and we want to be like them too.

All Saints' Day is about all of the Saints of God...living and dead. Together we form a wonderful fellowship of believers called the Communion of Saints. This coming Thursday...All Souls' Day...we will remember the Saints of God who have died...their love remains in our hearts...a legacy that can never die.

Let's remind ourselves again...Sainthood is not a reward from God for being a good person or for having done something extraordinary...it is a gift from God that sets us apart and empowers us to be examples for others. That empowerment comes with the duty to always work for the good of others. Sainthood is not about glorifying ourselves...it's about glorifying God.

We meet them in church...at the store...at the office...at lunch...on trains and buses...we meet the Saints of God anywhere...they are just like us...and there is not any reason we shouldn't be one too!

