

ALL SAINTS' DAY/XXII TRINITY 2018

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

REVELATION 7.2 ST MATTHEW 5.1



THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS STILL...SAINTS OF GOD THAT IS...THEY ARE JUST FOLK LIKE US...AND WE MEAN TO BE JUST LIKE THEM TOO.

We're taking some liberty anticipating All Saints' Day on the Sunday before it's proper observance on November 1. The rationale behind doing this is the observance of All Saint's Day should take place before the observance of All Souls' on November 2...although the two festivals are connected.

All Saints' Day celebrates the life and work of all Saints of God...living and dead...past present and even those who are yet to be born. All Souls' Day is the remembrance of the Saints of God...our family and friends and loved ones...who have died.

It's seems appropriate we acknowledge the life and work of two Saints of God...long-time members of Saint Joseph Parish who touched our lives and died recently. George Youngling and Elaine Secrest loved God and loved the Church. There are many others like them who led exemplary lives and went about doing their work with quiet dignity...and it is that quality that defines Sainthood.

We often think of Sainthood as something only certain people who have done something extraordinary...have their pictures on holy cards...and get to have churches named after them...can achieve. We can't earn or buy Sainthood...we become Saints of God at our baptisms. Sainthood is a gift from God...and that's an extraordinary gift by itself!

All Saints' Day is certainly the time we honor the people we read about in Scripture...the Blessed Mother, our patron Saint Joseph...the Apostles and Evangelists who helped spread the Good News about Jesus. And we honor Saints of God like King Charles I who died in 1649 defending the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Apostolic Succession, so important to Anglicans and Catholic Christendom.

What makes the Saints of God we read about in Scripture and throughout history so

believable is who they were...ordinary people like us...who followed Jesus and loved him...and tried their very best to do God's will. Peter and Andrew and James and John were two sets of brothers who were impulsive and loud-mouthed fishermen. Jesus called James and John..."Sons of Thunder"

The Blessed Mother was quietly praying when Gabriel paid her a visit to announce she would be the *Theotokos...the God-bearer...she said "yes"*. Scripture doesn't record our patron Saint Joseph saying one word...he simply took action and showed his love for Jesus and Mary.

We also thank God for the 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; family and friends. They are the Saints of God like us and we want to be like them too.

The Saints of God form a wonderful fellowship of believers called the Communion of Saints. The love our parents and grandparents and friends who have died had for us while they were alive remains strong in our hearts to this day. Saint Paul tells us of the three greatest gifts of the Holy Spirit...Faith, Hope and Love...Love is the greatest gift because it never dies!

When we invoke the names of the saints during the Mass or in one of the collects in the *Book of Common Prayer* we are recognizing the work they accomplished and we ask God to give us his grace to follow the good examples of all of the Saints of God...especially those we knew.

Let's remind ourselves Sainthood is not a reward from God for being a good person but a gift that sets us apart and empowers us to be examples for others. That empowerment comes with the explicit requirement to always work for the good of others...in quiet dignity...and to God's glory.

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