

It has been a very long year; most funerals ever in a year at Risen Savior. Some of those names, known here very long, a lot of history here, known well. All are dear family, some very close to you, naming your dear loved one, friends, even my sister named. We are the baptized, the fellowship of believers, the family of God it shows most profoundly at proper funerals.

I have not buried anyone famous. None the subject of news stories, no media influencers, CEOs, those with great authority; their memories known mostly to their children and friends. But they were known to the Lord. In every funeral you hear this familiar phrase from the Psalmist and Job: **Precious in the sight of the Lord's is the death of His saints. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.** So profoundly true. Precious to the Lord because they're not strangers to Him but their faces and lives would move Him to send forth His Son into the womb of the Virgin and offer Himself in their place upon altar of a cross.

The names read every All Saints' mean a great deal to some of you but they mean everything to the God who chose death so they might live. What an amazing day! I wish Pr. Burgdorf would've met them, and other very dear people over the years at RS...but he will one day. That is sure.

One of the most horrific portions of Scripture, Jesus says, **depart from Me, I never knew you.** But He knows His dear saints, their names, their life stories, the Lord knew them in the waters of their baptism, claimed them as His own child. It's the Lord's knowing that makes all the difference today, and in how you live, knowing your future certain.

Death, a solemn moment even for the Christian who knows death is not the end. It is the gate, door through which we pass with Christ to our own joyful resurrection but death always leaves sorrow, pain, emptiness in its wake. Why St. Paul urges us not to grieve like those ignorant of the hope within us but recognizes -we still grieve, we hurt, we are pained. Indeed, unresolved grief is one of the most enduring and torturous disorders we suffer in this mortal life, but we do not grieve as the world does, St. Paul tells you. Don't you dare. The Lord is ours.

All Saints' Day, once a year; but it is glimpsed in every Divine Service, every Sacrament. When you approach this Altar, heaven and earth together, with our Lord, celebrating the same feast with them, as they in heaven. Come with a profound sense of appreciation for the mystery of God who has all things in His hand and still has time, has room and longs for precious you and every other anonymous saint the earth soon forgets. And while you are in wonder over the God who can recall your name, knows your life, knows

every scrapped knee you've had, can count your tear as much as your hairs. He gives you not what you've deserved but riches beyond measure in a life that sin cannot taint and death cannot steal. And in the end, you will not have missed out on anything with them of what the world has to offer. Their Lord lives, so do they, and we cannot die,

So you await nothing less than the voice of our Lord who finishes the Beatitudes with the final blessed. **Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.** The saints who went before us were just like us, in a suffering church, a militant church, a church whose glory hidden for now, to be revealed on the day of our Lord. You are all sheep living among dangerous wolves, must be guarded, keep safe by the Shepherd Himself, and placed you in a family, with soon to be 2 shepherds to feed you, care for you according to His desire, the only life there is.

The appointed reading this day, everybody loves those Beatitudes. Yet, so misunderstand in Christendom as law, as a checklist to do, as your work, when it is of sweetest Gospel for you. Blessed is not an attitude or emotion but your state of being. Jesus fulfills the Beatitudes for you, it the reality of your life now, your life born of baptismal water, called by the Spirit through the voice of the Word, fed, nourished at His Table.

You are blessed because Christ has suffered for your every sin and died the death that was yours to die and rose to bestow upon you the life the grave cannot end. You are blessed because you have a future, guaranteed by Him whom death could not contain, and a life that will not end. You're blessed already in the midst of any suffering and hardship, even with the disdain of the world, even with struggles to believe and endure, spend long days without people we love.

This is why we name the names who die in the Lord and one day your name read, why we rejoice someday our names will be named. The blessed, the redeemed of the Lord, names written in the Book of Life.

What will happen in these times, I don't know. What happens Tuesday does not change your vocation or duty; regardless you know the Lord will use it all for the good of His saints. But I know soon, we will not care. We'll be free at last of all politics, elections, evil. Free of lies about God, false truths of Christ; free of hurts and regrets, of fear and sadness. He will wipe away every tear. Blessed are you, no good thing does He withhold from those who are His. May we be numbered where praises never end. Precious in the sight of the Lord are you His saints.