



ST. PATRICK'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

4797 Curtis RD Port St. John FL 32927

All Saints Day Transferred
November 3, 2024

The passage selected for the sermon this morning is taken from the Gospel:

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

Today, on the Feast of All Saints, the Chalice, the Tabernacle, and the priest are vested in white. The vestments are beautiful, but they pale beside the vestments of which they are an imitation, the robes of the Saints. “These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:14) The whiteness of their robes, the brightness of their vestment, is the reflection of the light of God seen face to face.

It was true for Moses when he returned from the Mount and his face shone so brightly it terrified the Israelites. At the Transfiguration, Jesus stood with Moses and Elijah, and their raiment was transformed to a glistering white. This is the transformation of the earthly to the heavenly. What was earthly is blessed and perfected. The heavenly is lit with the glistering light that comes being in the direct presence of God. All the God given beauty on earth is the merely palest hint of the beauty of heaven.

As Christians, we are guilty of making heaven seem a boring place. How many people, how many songs, books movies and lives teach that the reckless thrill of sin and desperation are

preferable to the boring monotony of standing before God and singing His praise day and night as servants in His court. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just as the whiteness of this vestment is the poorest imaginable reflection of the glistering robes of the saints, so also the pleasures of this world, the happiness and thrills are merely the weakest, bleached out reflection of the ecstatic and Blessed joy which we will enjoy in the presence of Our Lord in Heaven.

We often think of heaven as the absence of tribulation and pain. It is true that we will experience a peace and serenity in heaven that is impossible in this mortal vale. St. John tells us that in heaven, “God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.” But heaven isn’t the just absence of temptation and trial. Heaven is the perfection of love. In heaven, we no longer see the object and source of our highest love through the glass darkly, but we behold God, our Father, in all His Mercy, majesty and Glory.

In our earthly lives, we have grace filled moments that approach that perfected state of love. A friend standing by us when we are desperately alone. Young lovers staring into each other’s eyes and seeing the potential wonders that they will become because they are united in love. A mother or father holding a new born infant. The loving spouse that sleeps in a chair by a sick bed to hold the hand of their beloved as they face death. These are transcendent moments, hints of what is in store for us when we will be surrounded eternally by the limitless love of God for us in heaven.

Those moments can’t be sustained in this world. The child that snuggled in a mother’s arms pulls away as it ages because that love becomes strangling expectation. Young lovers who once saw unlimited potential in each other’s eyes stop looking each other in the eye. Either sinfulness

makes us feel unworthy and we punish our lover for caring for us when we believe we are unlovable, or pride and narcissism slip in, making us see our lovers as means to our satisfaction rather than partners in grace. The infant whose birth filled us with boundless energy and zest for life, becomes the source of anxiety about whether we can have enough or know enough to be the parents we wished we could be. The hand held in love at the moment of passing becomes immediately afterward, the occasion of grief and separation.

In this world love is inconstant. Lovers leave. Lovers change. Love is unrequited or abandoned or perverted. Lovers reserve a dark place of secrets they will not share. The thrill of earthly love is the pulse of fear, fear of rejection, betrayal and hurt. In this world, when we open our hearts and share our desires hopes and fears, those secrets are turned into weapons that open poisonous wounds that can scarcely be healed. Love in this world is temporal. Ecstasy lasts a moment, stress lasts for decades and loneliness and insecurity are lifelong realities.

But we are not abandoned to earthly love. We have the foretaste of heavenly love given to us in the sacrifice of Jesus and in the life of His saints. In heaven, no guilt intrudes in our love to make us hateful. In heaven, we are together, in the life of our Lord, for eternity. We don't have to reject for fear of being rejected. Love leads only to more love, never to separation or grief or pain. The love between a husband and wife that gives only a flickering and un-sustainable moment of physical transport is replaced by Godly love, in which ecstatic transport is eternal and unflagging. It is the joyous love that makes us want to sing in gratitude and praise at the top of our lungs, and the psalm never ends.

Our love for each other is perfected in our love for God. He opens our hearts and floods his light upon our secret desires, sin and fears, exposing them and replacing them with the peace that passes all understanding. By His love, we are able to embrace each other as the people we were meant to

be, finally able to share with each other the best of all our hope, giving the gift of a self that is sanctified in love, nourishing, respectful and joyous.

That ecstatic heavenly love reaches out to us in our earthly wretchedness as prayers for the church militant by the communion of saints. The love of God, shared between the persons of the Trinity pours forth in abundance. The godly love shared by the Saints, pours forth and overflows heaven, spilling abundant grace upon us who are in history. God's command for us is to love Him with all our heart and mind and soul, and to show that love, by loving our neighbors as ourselves. Here, because of pride, sin and weakness, we can scarcely sustain that command. In heaven, unshackled by the temporality and limitation of this world, the saints keep His commandment perfectly. They love and praise God in ecstasy and joy, praying and singing unceasingly, heart, mind and soul, as they behold His face. The love of the Saints then overflows heaven as perfect caring, tearless, unashamed love for everyone that had gone before them, and everyone who is yet to join them.

The miracles that each of us pray for are also accompanied by the prayers of the saints in our own lives. We are never alone in our prayer, and God is good to answer those prayers we share with the saints from our lives.

The saints pray for Our Lord to shower us with grace to persevere in this world so we can join them in the fulfillment of our earthly hope in the eternal bliss of godly love in heaven. The spouse, the parent, the friend, the child, everyone who goes to rest in Christ prays that their beloved here on earth will follow them and share their joy. Great saints, Apostles, prophets, martyrs, and the beloved of our own history care for us because our Lord has chosen us, and they pray that we receive the grace we need, grace to join them in heaven.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.