

Reading for the Solemnity of All Saints

1st November 2026

First reading

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

‘Behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.’

I, John, saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, ‘Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of the sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ And all the angels were standing round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, ‘Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.’

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, ‘Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?’ I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 24(23):1-2. 3-4b. 5-6. R cf. 6

Such are the people who seek your face, O Lord.

The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness, the world, and those who dwell in it.

It is he who set it on the seas; on the rivers he made it firm.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place?

The clean of hands and pure of heart, whose soul is not set on vain things.

Blessings from the Lord shall he receive, and right reward from the God who saves him.

Such are the people who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Second reading

1 John 3:1-3

‘We shall see God as he is.’

Beloved: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 11:28

Alleluia, alleluia.

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, says the Lord,
and I will give you rest.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12a

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’

At that time: Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

Many of us have strange notions of what a saint looks like. Years ago, at the funeral of Princess Diana, Diana’s brother cautioned against making her into a kind of a saint. Addressing his dead sister he announced: ‘indeed to sanctify your memory would be to miss out on the very core of your being, your wonderfully mischievous sense of humour with the laugh that bent you double, your joy for life transmitted wherever you took your smile.’

But is it really true that the saints never broke the rules (St Augustine?), never experienced the dark night of the soul (The Little Flower?), never had a sense of humour? (‘God save us from sullen Saints’ — St Teresa of Avila), never broke into a great smile? The answer is, ‘of course it is not true.’ The saints were fully human. They struggled with temptation; they savoured life’s joy. On All Saint’s day let us think of all the good people who have crossed our paths and enriched our lives — parents, class mates, parishioners. They were not perfect, but they were in their own way great human beings.

The priest once asked the class: what do you have to do to become a saint? One hand shot up: ‘You have to die, Father’ said the little boy. In a sense of course he was right. But there are many living saints who are truly living with the spirit of Christ and are on the way to eternal union with him.

Sanctity is a divine gift in which we share. It is much too big for us to experience alone. As we share in the experience of sin and death, so too can we share in holiness and life. Each person is already implanted with the Spirit and the grace of God. The main thing that can prevent us from living by the power of God’s grace is not being aware that we have it. We are called children of God, not just in the after-life, but now, at this very moment and all through our lives.