

There are 3 Reflections here that you may find helpful. The first two are on the Feast of All Saints, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> one is on the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed which we celebrate today, November 2.

## Pope on All Saints: Beatitudes show path to holiness & happiness

Pope Francis in his Angelus address for the Feast of All Saints, reflected on how the Beatitudes show us the path that leads to the Kingdom of God and to happiness. To be a saint, he says, is to walk on this road, especially through joy and prophecy manifested in our lives. It leads to God's Kingdom and to happiness, and that consists in humility, compassion, meekness, justice and peace. He spoke about two aspects of this way of life: joy and prophecy.

### No holiness without joy

Jesus begins the Beatitudes with the word "Blessed", which means great happiness, the "joyful discovery of being God's beloved sons and daughters". The Pope says that this is a gift we receive as God comes to "dwell in our lives" and hence "we are blessed". A Christian's joy then is not a passing moment of happiness or optimism, but one grounded in the certainty of facing all life's situations under "God's loving gaze", drawing courage and strength from it. The Saints are great witnesses to this fact, having lived through so many tribulations, yet always bearing witness to the joy of being loved and sustained by God. Without joy, the Pope noted, faith can risk becoming a "rigorous and oppressive" exercise. We should ask ourselves if we radiate joy in our own lives, or do we have a "funeral face", the Pope said, emphasizing that "there is no holiness without joy."

### Prophetic witness in our lives

The second dimension the Pope pointed out is "prophecy", nothing that the Beatitudes are addressed to the poor, the persecuted and to those who desire justice. It's a message that goes against the worldly recipe for happiness that is focused on seeking riches, power, and fame. Jesus instead says that "true fullness of life is achieved by following Him, by putting His Word into practice", the Pope said, and this requires seeing that we are nothing without God and must make room for Him in our lives in order to truly find joy.

### Prophecy of a new humanity

In conclusion, the Pope summed up how the Beatitudes reflect "the prophecy of a new humanity" and a new way of living our lives by making ourselves small and

putting all our trust in God. All this entails what the Beatitudes call for: meekness over might, mercy over selfishness, working for justice and peace over promoting or complicity with injustice and inequality. With God's help, the Pope said, holiness means accepting and carrying out "this prophecy that revolutionizes the world". We should ask ourselves then how much we bear witness to the prophecy of Jesus, he added, or whether we simply conform to life's comforts and worldly ways. He prayed that the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose blessed soul joyfully magnified the Lord, might help us follow the path of the Beatitudes, the way of the Saints.

### **Pencil Preaching for the Solemnity of All Saints November 1.** *Pat Marrin*

“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed” (1 John 3:2).

*Rv 7:2-4. 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt 5:1-12*

Yesterday, the local church my wife loved, remembered and loved her back along with other parishioners who have died this past year. As I shared the familiar ritual, it occurred to me that she is now part of the communion of saints we remember not because they have slipped into the past as memories, but because they have gone on ahead into the future, our future, as we await our own entry into the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us, cheers us on and watches over us.

This is how they remain with us. When Archbishop Oscar Romero spoke of his own impending death in 1980, he said, “If they kill me, I will rise again in the people of El Salvador.” Like Jesus himself, our beloved dead do not disappear, but go before us into the community, where their spirits and example reappear again and again in those who imitate them.

The Beatitudes describe their presence and efforts during their lives, often incomplete and imperfect, but leaning like love into the future they wanted for themselves and others, determined but gentle, enduring life’s sorrows, losses and conflicts, making peace, showing mercy, always alert for God in simple things, doing the best they could. They grow in wisdom in their absence, teaching us patience and humility. We learn to find ourselves not in personal achievement but by disappearing into the community, matching our gifts with those of others to quietly accomplish more together than anyone could imagine alone.

Diane was such a person in her nearly 79 years; it was my beatitude to share 36 of those with her, and I am grateful to know she is at peace and among the saints, still very much with us as we celebrate today’s feast.

## **The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, Nov. 2 by Pat Marrin**

**“This in the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day” (John 6:39).**

*Readings: Wis 3:1-9; Rom 6:3-9; John 6:37-40*

Jackie Kennedy was once quoted as saying that the Catholic church, for all its faults and irrelevance for many modern secularists, really knew how to help people deal with death. The church’s rituals and symbols, so ancient and reassuring, carry the mourners through their grief to hear the Gospel message that love is stronger than death. Our beloved dead are in the everlasting embrace of God, who is all powerful and all merciful.

Though gone from sight, absent physically from the world and from our lives, our beloved dead are still present in some mysterious way, cheering us on to the same goal they now possess fully and joyfully. God keeps every promise, and God’s mercy receives us even in our sins and shortcomings, including us among the “saints,” both famous and ordinary. Everyone is there, welcomed and restored as a new creation.

Science knows the fact of death. Our culture explores it in movies about zombies, the living dead, and in inspiring stories about heroes who overcome tragedy. We search for answers, a glimpse through the veil of loss to find a connection to those who are gone. All the answers take us into the realm of faith, and what reassurance we find is a matter of belief, not certainty. The human mind and heart seem wired to the question: “What happens next? Will we ever see you again?”

We hear the answer from the Book of Wisdom: “The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction. But they are in peace” ([3:1-9](#)). We hear the promise from Jesus: “This is the will of the one who sent me, that I should not lose anything of what he gave me, but that I should raise it on the last day” (John 6:38).

The Eucharist is the “Thanksgiving” we celebrate that Jesus, our Lord and brother, has gone before us through death to new life. We follow him by emptying our lives into the community, by serving one another, by giving ourselves away long before the day we utter our last word and breathe our final breath. We believe that God has entrusted us to Jesus, and because he has given his life for us, even though we die, we will be with him forever.