

# Read

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12a

# Solemnity of All Saints

November 1, 2023



## REFLECTION

In the Old Testament, we read about certain ways of living and behaving so that people's actions matched God's way. For example, the Ten Commandments are ways of living that we still follow today. In today's Gospel we hear about Jesus proclaiming the Beatitudes, ways we must live so that our actions are in keeping with God's vision for the kingdom. Jesus tells his disciples that by loving the poor, creating a peaceful world, living simply, and living with compassion they will experience the kind of kingdom that God wants for them. All of these teachings are not simply a checklist of things to make sure we get into heaven; instead, they describe a way of life that we are called to make our own as followers of Christ. It is a challenging way for all Christians, even for the saints! It is a way that often seems at odds with what our friends might be doing or what society is saying is the popular thing to do. In order to follow the Beatitudes and all of Christ's other teachings, we must rely on him to show us the way and depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us in our daily lives.



## ACTION

The Beatitudes are meant for people of all ages and apply to all time periods. This week, rewrite the Beatitudes in a way that makes them relatable to others your age. Then consider rewriting the Beatitudes for other specific groups, like your family. Or what would the Beatitudes look like for your parish community or your youth group? Your town or city? Your state? Your country? Remember, the Beatitudes are meant to be challenging because they move us beyond the status quo. Try to stay as true to the original meaning of the Beatitudes as you can. As you are thinking over how to reword them, make sure to check-in with your own daily choices and attitudes—do they represent what Jesus was teaching?



Check out this interesting video from Fr. Mike Schmitz about who goes to heaven.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TT4JAxfhgcQ>

## ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Which of the Beatitudes do you find most relevant in our world today?
- ❖ Which of the Beatitudes do you find to be the most challenging in today's world?



November 1, 2023

# SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS

## LECTIONARY #667

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

Psalms 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12a

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

In today's Gospel, we see Jesus taking time to be with the faithful crowds that have gathered around him, including the disciples. We first hear him acknowledging the struggles they are having as they are trying to follow lives of discipleship. This speaks to our lives as well, and all the struggles teens may be facing in their lives. Then we hear Jesus give messages of hope and strength. He continually says that they will be blessed, that they will receive the love and grace of God. This is a much-needed message in today's world. The Gospel today is one of hope, courage, and strength. Jesus takes time to encourage the faithful as he does us each day.

**Q FOCUS:** *When the world wears us down, we look to Jesus for comfort, healing, and love.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Every year on November 1, we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints. This day recognizes all of those who have passed away and are now in heaven, including those saints we know and whom the church has named and those whose names we do not know, but whom God has welcomed into his presence. We celebrate these holy men and women because they give us an example of discipleship in all walks of life: men and women, rich and poor, young and old, religious and ordained and married, these faithful witnesses show us how to follow Christ more closely. When

we pray the Litany of Saints, we are not praying to the saints (we only pray to God!). Instead, we are asking the saints to pray for us (intercession), just as we would ask our friends on earth to pray for us.

### Church Teaching Connection

"Each Beatitude is composed of three parts. Firstly, there is always the word "blessed". Then there is the *situation* in which the blessed find themselves: poverty of spirit, affliction, hunger and thirst for justice, and so on. Lastly, there is the *reason* for the beatitude, introduced by the conjunction 'because': 'Blessed are they because, blessed are those because . . .'. The eight Beatitudes are like this and it would be good to learn them off by heart, to have this law that Jesus gave us, precisely in our minds and hearts" (Pope Francis, General Audience, January 29, 2020).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Matthew 5:1-12a

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: / "Blessed are the poor in spirit, / for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. / Blessed are they who mourn, / for they will be comforted. / Blessed are the meek, / for they will

inherit the land. / Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, / for they will be satisfied. / Blessed are the merciful, / for they will be shown mercy. / Blessed are the clean of heart, / for they will see God. / Blessed are the peacemakers, / for they will be called children of God. / Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, / for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. / Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

The Gospel passage from Matthew today is one of hope. This connects with our celebration of All Saints because the saints hoped for eternal life with God. They also brought hope to those to whom they ministered.

Many of us have probably heard the Beatitudes before, but today let's look at them from a different angle by imagining ourselves on that hill with Jesus. Jesus can see the crowds of people and he can feel their yearnings. Imagine that it has been a long day. He can sense them questioning the efforts of their faith. He knows they are looking for comfort and he knows that he is the only one that can meet them in these trying times. Put yourself in that moment. What do you yearn for? What relief do you need in your life? Jesus talks to those who struggle in spirit. What does that mean to you? He talks to those who are mourning. What could they be sad about? He talks to those who have had injustice put upon them and those who are timid. Imagine being treated unfairly and then becoming timid because of that hurt.

► Have you experienced any of these situations of yearning for something, of mourning, or of being treated unfairly? If you are comfortable doing so, share with us a bit about what it was like and the effect that situation had on you.

Situations in Jesus' time are not so different from our time. These experiences of yearning, mourning, and suffering injustice seem to be a part of every culture throughout history. It is sad that this is true, but Jesus' words give us hope and help us become agents of hope.

In addition to speaking to those who are suffering, Jesus talks to those who are doing the work of the kingdom, the ones who are already acting with mercy and who are working for peace and justice. He also talks to those who have been persecuted for their faith, those that have been put down because they have been firm in their belief in spite of what others might practice and believe. Often people do not understand our faith and we hear untrue assumptions. It can be exhausting to be a disciple; it seems like our work is never finished. Jesus can see in the eyes of the crowd that these faithful are tired, they need a glimmer of hope, and they need the kind of strength only God can provide. He sees that when he looks at us, too.

► Who works for peace in our world today?

How can you be part of that effort?

► Have you ever been looked down upon or insulted because of your faith? How did that make you feel?

The Christian life is not always easy. We don't simply say in one moment that we are Christians and then in the next moment, life becomes so much easier. Rather, we know that when we follow Jesus, life seems to get harder. But there is hope and strength. Jesus refreshes us and gives us strength to carry on. The lives of the saints we celebrate today bear witness to that. They have overcome these things— injustice, sorrow, persecution, and much more—yet remained faithful to God. We can see God's grace at work in their lives and it gives us hope for our own path of discipleship.

## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 58.

**Jesus sees you and wants to comfort you.**

**The Christian life is not without trials.**

**Our reward for our faith will be great in heaven.**

## Act on the Word

### Jesus Sees You, Too

For this activity, you will need newspapers or access to online news sources, enough so that each small group can use the resources. You will also need paper and pens and access to a sung version of the Litany of the Saints.

Divide the teens into several small groups. Then assign each group one or two of the "blessed" groups listed below (until they are evenly distributed).

- \* The poor in spirit
- \* Those who mourn
- \* The meek
- \* Those who suffer injustice (who hunger and thirst for righteousness)
- \* The merciful
- \* The clean of heart
- \* The peacemakers
- \* Those persecuted for doing good works
- \* Those who are persecuted for their Christian faith

Using news sources, have each small group create a list of people who fit into the categories of the "blessed" they have been assigned. After the groups have had time to come up with their lists, they should work on coming up with ideas about how they might help these populations. These should be practical suggestions that your group could do together throughout the year. Once the teens have finished working on these, have them share their ideas with the larger group. Conclude the activity by reminding the teens that we can turn to the saints for examples of how they were able to bring hope to the world and that we can ask the saints for their prayers as we continue in our work of discipleship. Finish by playing the Litany of the Saints.

## Closing Prayer

*Lord of all the saints,  
today we honor our sisters and brothers  
who have gone before us in faith.  
May their dedication to you be an  
example for us.  
May their courage inspire us.  
When we lie in death,  
raise us up to join their song of praise.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.