

Read

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

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

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12a

LIVING THE WORD

Solemnity of All Saints

November 1, 2020



REFLECTION

The Beatitudes are countercultural values. Unless said with sarcasm, our society wouldn't consider being "persecuted for the sake of righteousness" as *#blessed*. Recall the four African American college students in 1960, who politely requested (and were adamantly denied) service at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, NC. They remained seated, refusing to move until the store closed. The police were unable to take action due to the determination of the four men to maintain a peaceful protest, despite intense persecution and provocation. In the midst of enduring racial harassment, we might not describe the Greensboro Four as "blessed," but it's fair to say that their impact on the Civil Rights movement makes our whole nation very "blessed." When our actions reflect the Beatitudes, the whole human community is, in fact, very "blessed;" a word that simply means to be made holy, set apart by God's grace. It is this blessedness of the whole human community, past, present, and future, which is what we mean by "the communion of saints," that the Solemnity of All Saints truly celebrates.

ACTION

This week, consider how you can address the evil of racism that still exists in our hearts and our communities. In their November 2018 Pastoral Letter against racism, "Open Wide Our Hearts," the bishops of the United States offer some concrete ways we can respond to racism. We are encouraged to listen to the stories of those who have suffered individual and systematic racism. From these encounters, we are called to raise awareness about the racism that exists in our society and examine our own attitudes toward others.

"Even when they call us mad, when they call us subversives and communists and all the epithets they put on us, we know we only preach the subversive witness of the Beatitudes, which have turned everything upside down."

—St. Óscar Romero 

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Which Beatitudes do you think you are most successful at practicing? Which do you struggle with?
- ❖ If you hear someone make racist or disparaging remarks about a classmate, how can the Beatitudes help you to respond?



November 1, 2020

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

The Beatitudes illustrate God's promises for his beloved people. The saints who have gone before us into heaven have lived these promises, bringing hope, comfort, mercy, and peace to those who most need it. Like the saints, we strive to lead holy lives in imitation of our Lord. On this holy day when we celebrate all the saints in heaven, we remember God's gracious promises to us; we know that we are loved and remembered by the one who loved the world so much, that he set us free from our sin. We are sent forth to be Christ for one another.

Q FOCUS: *To act with justice and mercy.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today, we celebrate the saints. Tomorrow, we celebrate the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day). This is a special day that we set aside every year to remember those who have passed from this life to the next. Because the feasts of All Saints and All Souls' Day are at the beginning of the month of November, the Church traditionally sets aside this month as a special time of prayer and remembrance. Create a Book of Remembrance. Have a blank journal available and invite the young people to write the names of deceased family members or friends for whom they would like to pray. Throughout this month, at the end of every gathering, recall these people and keep them in your prayers.

Church Teaching Connection

"When we fight poverty and oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man's spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race. For peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men" (*Populorum progressio*, 76).

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 Catholic Church has a tradition of recognizing saints. Saints are those people who are already enjoying the eternal happiness of life in heaven in the presence of God. We recognize saints through the process of canonization, whereby the Church officially states that these men and women have lived exemplary lives in service of the Gospel and have interceded for us who are still on earth through miracles. Throughout the year, we remember saints on their feast days, which usually coincide with the day of their death—the day they entered into heaven.

► Is there a saint to whom you have a special devotion? Which saints do you admire most, and why do you admire them?

Abiding with God are other saints, those whose names are unknown and whose population is uncountable. As human beings, we cannot know all people who have been accepted into the heavenly kingdom. Today we celebrate also celebrate all those saints

who are in heaven whose names and stories we do not know.

Part of the Catholic tradition is asking for the intercession of the saints. We do not pray to the saints, because God alone is the object of our worship. Rather, intercessory prayer is prayer that we offer for one another. When we pray for someone else, we are asking God for something on that person's behalf. We also can ask others to pray for us. Just as a mother on earth might pray for her daughter, a saint in heaven can pray for one of us, interceding before God on our behalf. This intercessory prayer is borne out of love for one another.

► For whom do you pray? From whom do you ask for prayers on your behalf?

► It is easy or challenging to think of the saints as friends whom we can ask to pray for us?

The Gospel reading today features the Beatitudes. In these words, we find the Gospel message condensed into action—this is how we should live out God's love. The ideas presented in the Beatitudes remind us of the pain and joy of being human, and the hope-filled promises that God gives his people. The saints lived out the Beatitudes and have seen their reward in heaven.

When we closely examine the Beatitudes, we see instead of glorifying the powerful, God cares for the weak. Instead of recognizing the happy as favored people, God promises to bring comfort to those who mourn. We see that God values practices of mercy, peacemaking, and righteousness in his children.

► How do you live out the Beatitudes in your life? What does it mean to hunger and thirst for what is right?

We are called to bring righteousness and justice to our communities in our everyday lives. This is how we can help to transform the world into an image of the Kingdom of God.

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 54.

How can you uniquely contribute to a just society?

We are called to act with mercy and justice, as Jesus teaches us by his life.

The Beatitudes are what Christians are called to do in order to help bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

Act on the Word

Putting Justice into Action

You will need to bring in some recent local and world newspapers to lead this activity.

We are called to be a source of justice, righteousness, mercy and comfort to those suffering in our communities and in the world. Lead the teens in a discussion about some of the injustices that are present in their schools, your community, and the world. How are Christ's followers called to respond to issues such as local immigrant communities' persecution, homeless students in the school systems, or living conditions for war refugees from far-flung countries? (Please note that these issues are not standard in every community. Select issues that best apply to your locale.) Bring a newspaper and look at the headlines and stories that illuminate the suffering that is happening in the world. Help the young people to be drawn into the stories of human suffering and discuss the importance of empathy. Empathy drives our ability to respond to the suffering of others. In today's Gospel, and by the witness of the saints, Jesus calls all of us to act with compassion toward these marginalized people.

As a group, select a group or cause for which you all will work to provide aid or assistance. For example, if your region has a high number of war refugees, contact a sponsoring charity and learn what needs are present in the refugee community. Your group may be able to assist by conducting a parish-wide drive for gently used linens and household items. If there has been a recent hurricane or other natural disaster, perhaps the group can collect money after each Mass and use the money to send safe drinking water to the disaster victims.

As your group engages in charitable work, be sure to emphasize that the root of this charitable work is our identity in Christ. Recall that such acts are a response to Christ's mercy for us. He continues to show us this mercy through the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, from which we are sent forth to be like Christ for one another.

Closing Prayer

Lord God,

you raise up saints in our midst to inspire us

to holiness and to show us the way to you:

men and women, old and young,

people of every language and nation,

apostles and martyrs, virgins and religious,

pastors and doctors.

May their example inspire us and their

intercessions help us on the way to sainthood,

for we, too, are called to be saints.

We ask this 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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.