

## Solemnity of All Saints

† Sunday, 31 October 2021 – [31 Sunday Ordinary Time superseded]



In England & Wales Cycle of Prayer: Justice and Peace

Keynote: To be holy, is to be truly happy counted among the blessed of the God

### Book of Revelation 7: 2-4, 9-14

This book was probably written at the time of the persecution of the Christians under the Roman Emperor Domitian. With its almost unique language and style, interpretation, even today, is not easy. But here with the opening of the seventh seal, there is depicted the triumph of the Christian who bears the *'seal of the living God.'* The Christian faithful appreciate that these holy men and women of God are united with the Church on earth, as one people in the body of Christ. The text describes the triumph of the great multitude of the Saints of God, their very closeness to God, and finally describes the stuff of which such men and women of God are made. As the author describes: *'I saw a huge number, impossible to count, of people from every nation, race, tribe and language; they were standing in front of the throne... dressed in white robes and holding palms in their hands. They shouted aloud, "Victory to our God, who sits on the throne!"'*

### Responsorial Psalm 23 (24): 1-6

The song of the blessed who behold the awesome presence of God

### First Letter of John 3: 1-3

Because of the love God has lavished upon us, we are rightly called *'Children of God.'* What we understand and know now through faith, will one day be revealed, for *'we shall be like him because we shall see the Father as he really is.'* John says, *'we are already the children of God... what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is. Surely everyone who entertains this hope must purify self, must try to be as pure as Christ.'*

### Gospel according to Matthew 5: 1-12

This gospel passage begins with a cry of joy because the Kingdom of God is near. What may have been the themes of Jesus' teaching to the crowds, is recorded by Matthew as a practical programme for life, a series of "what to do's" for the disciple who wishes to follow Jesus, and to shape the future Kingdom of God. *'Happy [Blessed] are the poor in spirit... Happy the gentle... Happy those who mourn... Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right... Happy the peacemakers.'* This is the stuff of which saints are made.

The translation: *'Happy'* does not do justice to the meaning here, maybe *'blissfully happy and blessed by God'*. Equally some scholars would translate the Greek word *'μακάριοι'* [Latin *'beati'*] as being a command to be poor in spirit, gentle, peacemakers. In the Orthodox tradition these phrases are called *'The Commandments of Blessedness'* and are known to us as *'The Beatitudes'* – the Blessed (Happy ones) are those who are consecrated to God's service, those who are open to God and blessed in that sense. To be truly *'happy'*, to be blessed, to be open to God and do these things, behave in these ways, then, *'Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.'*

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NOTE – Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed is on Tuesday, 2 November 2021