

Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

**THE SAINTS WILL
BE MARCHING IN.
BE ONE OF THEM!**



SUNDAY READINGS:

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

Psalms 24: 1-6

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5: 1-12a

COMMENTARY

Happy feast day, all you saints of today! Are you surprised that I write this? Perhaps you are thinking, "She can say that but, after all, she is a Sister and sisters and priests are closer to God. They have a connection to God. Their prayers are heard before mine are." My

dear people, how wrong can you be! If any consecrated person is closer to God, it is not because of the vows she/he has taken, but because of the relationship with God that she/he has deepened with God throughout one's life. We all are sinners, as St. Francis would say. We are the saints and sinners who seek to do the will of God, following in the footprints of Jesus. We choose to be saints at times, and we fail at times in our sinfulness.

I had a teacher once when I was a young sister who surprised me very much, but from whom I learned a great deal. She revealed to the class that she had a serious problem with kidney stones and that her doctor wanted to do surgery. However there was an alternative to surgery, but a new treatment that was a bit risky. Like good Catholic students (mostly lay people), we all assured her that we would pray that the new procedure would work for her. Her response was, "Just pray that God's will be done." She was so free and certain of God's love that the outcome was not important. The trust in God was most important. She was a saint. (By the way, the new procedure worked!)

Another example I would like to share, I have already written about, Sr. Dorothy Stang, a Notre Dame de Namur sister, who was assassinated in Brazil because of her work with the poor farmers. Many of the farmers were killed by paid gunmen by the rich land owners because they wanted to plant soy beans and pasture their cattle. The assassination of the farmers were rarely broadcasted because they were not important enough. When Dorothy was murdered, it became international news. They were all saints.

And you, a good person, someone who tries to be faithful to your commitments, who loves but has never done anything extraordinary by the world's definition, you are a saint. Do you fail? Yes, don't we all? Do you try to do better? Yes. Does God love you and wants you to be in God's presence for all eternity? Yes. Do you want to be with God for all eternity? _____ (fill in the blank). Then become a saint here on earth, so as to be one forever. I hope to meet you in eternity and we will be one of those marching in!

NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

First Reading: Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

In the past the Book of Revelation has been misunderstood by many people and religions. It isn't about the end of the world nor the antichrist. John wrote it as he and the community reflected on the persecutions that the early Christians suffered at the hands of the Romans. The writings are intended to encourage the Christians and show them that Jesus, the Lamb, has not abandoned them. John uses symbolic language to protect the Christians from being further persecuted by the Romans. The martyred Christians are the new chosen ones, the saints of the first century of Christianity.

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NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24: 1-6

The response for today's psalm was surely chosen because of the feast of all Saints. We are, indeed, the people who long to see the face of God. The psalmist recognizes that God is not only the Creator of the earth and all that is in it, but God takes care of creation in all its forms. It is our desire to "climb" up the mountain so that we may see the face of God. This will come true when we climb for the last time when God calls us home.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3

This letter of John reveals how deep a relationship he had with Jesus and the Father. He writes with such tenderness and certainty of God's love, describing us as God's children. Imagine the awesome moment when we see God face to face, when we shall see God as God is! It almost wants to make us complete the journey home today!

Gospel: Matthew 5: 1-12a

Fr. Richard Rohr writes about the Beatitudes and calls them the Commandments for the followers of Jesus. Instead of the "thou shall not.." we hear from Jesus "Blessed are the poor, they who mourn, the meek, they who hunger and thirst...they who are persecuted..." The guidelines for our lives are much different than those that Moses received. For some reason which is a mystery for most of us, suffering is part of the journey to our heavenly home. In our most difficult moments, we are challenged to depend completely on God, not to negotiate our desires, but to surrender all into God's hands. If we can do that, our reward will be great.

Notes and Commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, OSF. Sr. Nancy is a past-president of the USCMA and currently serves in a small rural parish. She also serves her religious community on various committees. She is a spiritual director and translates for other groups in Portuguese.

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