

The Home Sunday Worship Supplement

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, 1st November 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Today is **All Saints Day**. It is a day when we celebrate being the children of God, which Lesle amplifies in her reflection. As children of God, we are blessed, and Jesus tells us through the Beatitudes in the Gospel reading what it means to be blessed.



He does not mention having beautiful houses in which to live, luxurious motor cars to drive and considerable money in the bank. Blessings comes to those who are poor, humble, merciful, hungry, working for peace, and accepting persecution. Reading this, perhaps some might think that becoming a disciple of Christ is not so attractive!

Nevertheless, we are blessed through being sanctified, or set apart by and for God. This is the meaning of the Greek word for 'saints' (*hagios*). We are 'called to be saints.' (1 Cor 1:2)

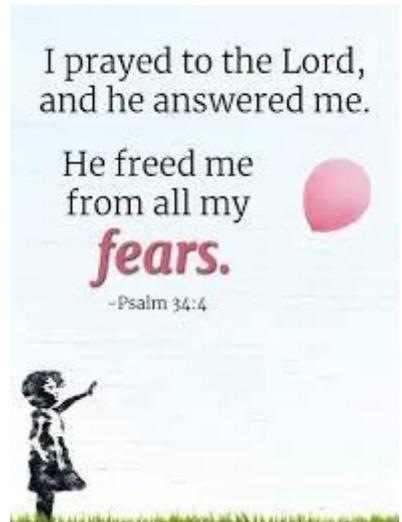
On All Saints day, we remember those who have gone before us on the journey of sanctification. Perhaps you remember some of them as saint-like people - people of patience, love, and service, people who were good listeners and encouragers. Today, we give thanks for them.

Their memories remind us that we are called to be saints each day. This doesn't mean being perfect, but it does mean being recognised as the children of God, people who are set apart for God with characteristics expressed through the Beatitudes and people who are daily being blessed by God.

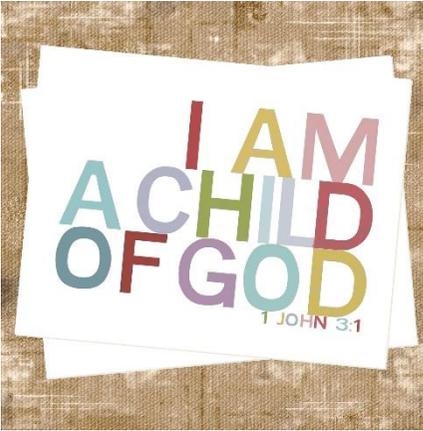
May you be blessed today,
Rev Clyde

Psalm 34: 1-10, 22

- ¹I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ²My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- ³O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
- ⁷The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
- ⁹O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
- ¹⁰The young lions suffer want and
hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no
good thing.
- ²²The LORD redeems the life of his
servants;
none of those who take refuge in him
will be condemned.



1 John 3:1-3



¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Reflection on 1 John 3:1-3 – Thanks to Lesle Cropp

There's Australian Eastern Standard Time and there's Australian Daylight Saving Time, but recent times would have to be declared *universally uncertain times*. The devastation of drought, bushfire, COVID-19 and political argy-bargy causes us to cry out “What next?” We live in the midst of deeply entrenched uncertainty.

The early church was also dealing with uncertainty. False teaching and unsteady faith challenged the tentative new believers. Much grief and doubt proliferated. So John wrote his epistles to bolster their burgeoning belief.

“Behold!” he urged. “Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God.” (v1)

Being residents of this world, there is so much we don't know; very little that we can control. In addition, we ourselves are not fully known. We are often not recognised for whom we really are, nor

taken seriously as the children of God. Uncertainty reigns and can wreak havoc with our resoluteness. It can darken the light we have within us and rob us of the hope that comes from loving God. Fear can overshadow faith. We can falter when we dwell on our incomplete identity in Christ.

“God still hasn't let us know what we will become,” John writes. (v2)

As an antidote to doubt, we are called to embrace uncertainty knowing that God is our Father – his love for us is all-encompassing, ever-assuring. The unpredictability of life is defeated by the dependability of God. The spiritual life is the life of a child, looking to a loving Father to protect us against the shadows.

What manner of love has the Father given to us?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3.16)

Jesus came to reveal the Fatherhood of God. The Father extends his great love to those who accept Jesus. God's love is:

- a cosmic love – that has crafted all Creation and yet takes each one of us as his children;
- a costly love – Jesus death and resurrection paid the price for salvation;
- a compassionate love - that arises out of Jesus' obedience to the Father in response to a hurting world;
- a love that changes – we become increasingly Christ-like;
- a commissioning love – we take that love out to others.

In order to master uncertainty in this world, we are urged to stand on the promises of God our Father. Even though we may not presently

know what the next day will bring, we have the assurance that when Christ appears again we shall be like him. Seeing him will make clear our likeness with him.

All of us who look forward to Jesus' coming again, stay ready with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own. (v3 The Message)

Uncertainty potentially diminishes how effectively we prepare for the future and thus contributes to anxiety and fear. Our assurance that God is our Father and Jesus is our Lord and Saviour is threatened. John's letter is a timely reminder. We can be certain that we are children of God because we know God.

Oswald Chambers offers a lucid explanation to this dilemma of certainty versus uncertainty.

“Certainty is the mark of the common-sense life; *gracious uncertainty* is the mark of the spiritual life. To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways – we do not know what a day will bring forth... When we are rightly related to God, life is full of spontaneous, joyful uncertainty and expectancy.” p120

These are indeed uncertain times and much has been made of the anxiety that pervades as a result of the COVID pandemic. Yet we have the answer – *gracious uncertainty*! Life need not be crushed when we rest in the love that God extends to his children through the saving grace of Jesus, his Son.

Amen

Collect

We praise you, heavenly Father,
 that you have knit together your chosen ones
 in one communion and fellowship
 in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord:
 give us grace so to follow your blessed saints
 in all virtuous and godly living
 that we may come to those inexpressible joys
 you have prepared for those who truly love you;
 through Jesus Christ our Saviour,
 who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
 one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Prayers for 1st November, 2020 – Thanks Sue Noble

God our creator, you made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them is yours; hear the prayers we bring for your people.

We praise you faithful Lord, because you set the stars in the sky and all the world was shaped by your will and hands. We pray for your creation, for a sense of wonder and delight at its beauty, for wisdom in finding the balance between just use of its resources and protecting the abundance of life within it. We pray for the continued work of organisations and individuals who develop technologies to ensure a sustainable future for the planet. We pray that our government will value highly the natural treasures of our land.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.

Creator God, we pray for our world. Revive our dreams of justice and truth, and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world especially where there is conflict; where peace seems so far away and so many have lost everything, even the faint hope of a peaceful future. Govern the

hearts and minds of all world leaders and those in authority that they may act justly, honestly and according to your will.

We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they will have the wisdom and courage they need to guide their people safely through the coronavirus pandemic.

Lord God, we bring before you the upcoming elections in America. We pray for a stabilising government – one with wisdom, compassion and a heart after yours - for leaders with integrity who seek your will and counsel.

We pray for those who have lost homes and are suffering from recent flooding in the Philippines. Provide for their needs and help them in their distress.

Loving God be with the people of Lebanon; we pray for the healing of deep hurts in communities, families and individuals as they strive to cope with injury, poverty, displacement, unemployment and the threat of COVID. Bring help and healing to the people of this country Lord, through your Holy Spirit and body.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.

Lord God we pray for our nation. We thank you for our leaders who are working tirelessly to guide us in the midst of this pandemic. Give them your strength and wisdom for the long journey. Help them in their efforts to keep us safe and to restore our economy.

We ask for your compassion on our farmers, their workers and all who provide food for our nation. Give them courage in times of drought and disaster. We pray for conditions that allow them to harvest their produce. Replenish their land, guide them in their practise so that the earth can bring benefit to our people for generations to come.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your church. We pray for Bishop Murray and Rev Clyde, that you will give them enough hours in the

day to accomplish tasks, enough rest to restore their minds and bodies and your wisdom in discerning all issues - the big and small.

We pray that your Spirit will fall afresh on us, so that we may live out the mission of your Gospel and grow your fruit in our communities.

We pray that your Word will spread throughout our diocese, bringing many to your Son. We ask that you will raise up grace filled rectors, passionate for Jesus and your word, who love people and are equipped for leadership in the parishes of Nambucca Heads, Sawtell & Kempsey. We give thanks for faithful men and women who exercise servant leadership in our diocese and parish. We thank you that we may joy *in* Christ, are safe *in* Christ and are encouraged by your body; our brothers and sisters who are *in* Christ.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.

Lord God we pray those who are in need. We pray that your mercy will sustain and support the anxious and the fearful in this time of uncertainty and distress. We ask that you will be close to those who have lost loved ones due to illness, tragedy or the coronavirus. Bring healing to those who are sick, lift up all who are discouraged and depressed; help us to be a friend to the lonely and those in need.

We pray for all in our diocesan and parish family who are experiencing affliction. Help them to rely on your gracious promises for comfort, strength and peace. We give you thanks that nothing can separate us from your love.

Lord in your mercy... hear our prayer.

Faithful God, we thank you for the example of all your faithful servants who have gone before us. Help us to follow in their footsteps with courage and hope. Teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will, we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.