

All Saints Church Good News Daily

Devotional readings for each day, parish birthdays and anniversaries

November 17-23, 2024

Sunday, November 17

Psalm 66 *Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds among mortals.* (v.5 NRSV)

The fool has said in her heart, “There is no God” (Psalm 14:1). That’s the kind of fool I was as a teenager. Long before my time one of the supposedly wisest men who ever lived, Solomon, described such people thus: “What born fools all people are who lived in ignorance of God, who from the good things before their eyes could not learn to know him who really is, and failed to recognize the artificer though they observed His works!” (Wisdom of Solomon 13:1).

During my numerous decades of living since my teen-age years, I have come to know and experience God’s love and presence by reading His words in His Scriptures, by experiencing His Church and His Sacraments, and by knowing His People—family and friends who have guided me and loved me into becoming Christian.

Many times since then I have seen God’s hand in the splendor of His creation. But I have seen God’s hand most of all in the light and love of others who know and love Him. I recognize now the truth of Paul’s words: “Ever since the creation of the world God’s eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things He has made” (Romans 1:20).

Habakkuk 1:1—2:1; Psalm 67; Philippians 3:13—4:1; Matthew 23:13-24

Birthdays: Bill Branner, Charlotte LaRue, Emily Mellowe

Anniversaries: David & Harrow Beers, Tim & Amanda Castino, Jeff & Laura Hale, Brian & Lytle Smith

Monday, November 18

Luke 16:19-31 *“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.”* (v.19)

Just before today’s Gospel story, Jesus had told his disciples: “You cannot serve God and wealth” (v.13c). Pharisees present at the time scoffed at him and so Jesus told them the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The story always makes me very uneasy when I recall the homeless people I have passed for years on the streets of almost any large city I’ve been in.

Are we only supplying a band-aid when we give a homeless person a little money? Are we helping to support a drug habit as others would tell us? Are we just trying to quiet our own conscience for not doing far more? Does my small gift bridge in any way the hideous gap between rich and poor in this, the wealthiest and most powerful of all nations?

Our Lord said to his disciples when they questioned him about how five thousand people could be fed, “You give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16). Wouldn’t he say the same thing to us if we asked him how our homeless brothers and sisters are to be fed today? I think he would tell us that each one of us, each individual, could give someone who needs it something to eat.

Habakkuk 2:1-4, 9-20; Psalm 89:1-18; James 2:14-26

Birthdays: Gretchen Basso, Lynn Branner, Lindy Freeman, Diane Nelson, Lytle Smith, Lillian Smith

Tuesday, November 19

Habakkuk 3:1-18 *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation.* (v.18)

The prophet Habakkuk asks God about why He lets the righteous suffer so much at the hands of the wicked. Why is He silent and why doesn’t He do something? The answer he receives from God is that God is using a cruel and powerful people as His instruments to punish the people of Israel for their own wickedness. The prophet concludes that in spite of temporary agonies, God is in complete control of His universe and therefore he can rejoice and exult in the God of his salvation.

When I served in Haiti, I asked God the same kinds of questions. Why were the Haitians so hideously poor? Why were so many starving? Why did so many babies die so soon after birth? Why didn’t He do something? It seemed to me that the answer I got was that none of the Haitians’ poverty was God’s fault—or theirs. It was ours. We don’t believe today, as Habakkuk did, that God uses people to punish one another, but we do believe that He calls us to try to help alleviate every bit of suffering that we can. He asks us to be co-workers with Him in His planning for the salvation of all His people.

In spite of the suffering we see or endure, we can rejoice in the Lord and exult in the God of our salvation for we, too, believe that He is in complete control of His universe.

Psalms 97, 99, 100; James 3:1-12; Luke 17:1-10

Birthdays: Zed Layson, Judy Maynard, Linda Rizzo, Bonnie Van Dyke

Anniversaries: Dan & Mildrey Mathewes

Wednesday, November 20

Luke 17:11-19 *Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”* (v.19)

Jesus healed all ten lepers in today’s Gospel story. Nine presumably hurried on their way while only one turned back to joyfully give thanks to the giver of the healing he had received.

A Benedictine monk once wrote that the root of joy is gratefulness. We tend to misunderstand the link between joy and gratefulness. We notice that joyful people are grateful and suppose that they are grateful for joy. But the reverse is true; their joy springs from their gratefulness. We hold the key to lasting happiness in our own hands. For it is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful. The Rt. Rev. John B. Coburn, in his priceless little book, *Prayer and Personal Religion*, tells his readers that if they want to become joyful people, they should learn to thank God, count their blessings, and list them—trusting Him as the author of everything good in their lives.

The tenth leper in Jesus’ story was healed spiritually as well as physically. The other nine limited their healing to the physical. What about us? How often do we neglect to thank our Savior for the gift of his healing love in our lives?

Malachi 1:1, 6-14; Psalms 101, 109; James 3:12—4:12

Birthdays: Jacob Butts, William Cobb, Scott Minnigan

Anniversaries: Bryan & Julia Stewart, Troy & Mary Walther

Thursday, November 21

Psalm 105:1-22 *Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.* (v.3)

Alan Jones, a former Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, writes in *Journey into Christ*: “that we are loved freely is the hardest of all things to accept. Self-hate and self-rejection blind us to the love that under girds our very existence. Even the most self-assured, self-satisfied, self-possessed people cannot really believe that they are genuinely loved or that they are even lovable....”

It is very hard for us to believe that God’s will for us is that we become joyful people who are in constant communion with Him and full of thanksgiving. But, Alan Jones continues, “God does love us. We are made after His image and this means there is a fundamental relatedness that exists between God and the human race. This relatedness is the most real thing about us.”

When we are at last enabled to respond to God’s great love with our own, we shall know the fullness of life that Christ lived, suffered, and died to bring us.

Malachi 2:1-16; James 4:13—5:6; Luke 17:20-37

Birthdays: Judy Fike, Beth Murray

Anniversaries: Jim & Debbie Stockton

Friday, November 22

Luke 18:1-8 *Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart.* (v.1)

Jesus makes his point about the importance of persistence in prayer by telling a parable full of contrasts. The unjust judge who doesn’t fear God or have any respect for people and who finally gives in to the nagging from the widow is the exact opposite of our loving Lord who cares greatly for every human being He has ever created and hears our prayers even before we utter them (Isaiah 65:24). The widow who seems to be unknown to the judge is not like us whose every thought, word, and deed are known by our Redeemer who will one day be our Judge. We are to be persistent like the widow, who continually asks for justice from her judge.

Julian of Norwich, the 14th century mystic, tells us that our Lord said to her: “I am the ground of your praying. First, it is my will that you should have this; then I make it your will, too; then I make you ask for it, and you do so. How then should you not have what you pray for?” She concludes: “Prayer fastens the soul to God and makes it one with His will, through the deep inward working of His Holy Spirit.”

Malachi 3:1-12; Psalm 102; James 5:7-12

Birthdays: MaryAnne Branner, Heather Brown, Sarah Butterfield, Betsy Gardner, Jean Jackson

Anniversaries: Trip & Deacon Liz Tucker

Saturday, November 23

Luke 18:9-14 *God, be merciful to me, a sinner.* (v.13b)

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector tells us how to be justified, accepted by God, made right with Him. A Bible commentary starts out explaining this parable of Jesus’ by saying: “Jesus instructs the disciples who journey on the way (that means you and me as well as the first ones) that their touted virtuous works will not earn them entrance into God’s kingdom.” In God’s kingdom of love, we cannot stand aside and look contemptuously at everyone else while listing what we consider our own great virtues.

In the light of God’s great love for each of us, and our pitifully meager response, what can we possibly say other than: “God, be merciful to me, a sinner?” Christ lovingly holds out a wounded hand to any one of us whenever we return to him asking for forgiveness.

Malachi 3:13—4:6; Psalms 107:33-43, 108; James 5:13-20

by Sister Mary Michael

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