

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, November 6th, 2022, All Saints & Legion for Remembrance
Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18, Psalm 149, Ephesians 1:11-23, Luke 6:20-31

Today we celebrate All Saints, and we welcome the Legion here for Remembrance.

The gospel is Luke's version of the beatitudes and love your enemies. This is the movement from selfishness and focus on self to relationship and others. Today as we remember those who sacrificed for country and fellow comrades, I am reminded of the survival impulse for all of us, fight, or flight.

Is there a sense of sainthood in those who move away from the temptation or flight and fight for self? I'm thinking of fire men and women who when others are running away from the fire run into a burning building.

This seems to be the recognition of our sense of connectedness, and thus we get to love our enemies. I don't know if it applies, but as a student at Queens university, I met a young lady whom I didn't like but couldn't put my finger on why. This may have just been a case of not feeling any sexual attraction, but it got me thinking, can we love someone we don't like? I may not have wanted to spend any time with her, but I realized if she had needed help, I would have helped her and done what was needed for her.

Maybe I could have learned this a lot earlier had I grown up with siblings. I only had a brother 10 years older, who was basically not living in the house when I was seven years old. Therefore, I didn't learn the love hate relationship those with siblings learn at an early age. They may not express love for their siblings, but when someone else attacks them they are quick to defend them.

The challenge of sainthood then comes back to the summary of the law. To love God with all your heart and soul mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. This means loving all three, God, neighbor, and self.

It may be more complicated than this, but can we love God and neighbor if we don't love ourselves?

I have said in the past, love of God is about receiving the love of God and accepting it for ourselves as true.

So, if we don't love ourselves, or don't feel loved are we then tempted to spend our time and energy showing how loveable we are and how loveable we can be? So, the focus is on ourselves and not on our neighbor or others. And if we constantly put neighbor or another first, will we at some point regret this and turn resentful against our neighbor or the other?

It seems to me that we need balance, to love God, neighbor, and self, however as difficult as loving self maybe. We do have a built-in priority for self preservation and self protection.

So today is about two things, to celebrate All Saints which who remind us of looking beyond ourselves and loving our neighbors in action and not just sentiment is both possible and beneficial to ourselves and others.

And to give thanks for those who have taken this to the ultimate and sacrificed their very lives so that we may have the freedom and hope we experience today.

They may not call themselves Saints and laugh at us if they heard us call them Saints, but it does fit with at least one way of understanding what it means to act like a Saint.

Amen

May God, who has bound us together in the company of all, in this age and the age to come Strength and encourage us all. Amen.

And May God, who has given us, in the lives of his saints, patterns of holy living and victorious dying, strengthen our faith and devotion, and enable us to bear witness to the truth against all adversity. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.