

## "With all the heavenly choir" Matthew 5:1-12 All Saints Sunday

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We find in our readings, and all over scripture, words translated as "saints". In Deuteronomy 33: 1-3, the Hebrew word is קִדְּשׁוֹ (qodesh), meaning "the consecrated" or "the dedicated". In verse 2, the prophet talks about the holy angels around the throne of God, but in verse 3, the saints are the Israelites, the chosen people of God.

"The LORD came from Sinai, and dawned from Seir upon us; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and he came from the ten thousand saints" conforms to the common vision of the Old Testament prophets that God, with the appearance of an elder, is sitting in light with countless angels around his throne, to serve Him night and day and to sing praises to Him. We have in our liturgy the song of the angels: "Holy, holy, holy, God of the universe. The heavens and the earth are full of your glory. "

Because in Revelation 2: 2-17, the vision changes. The apostle John saw with the angels and archangels and all the heavenly choir, "a great company, which no one could count, of all people and lineages and peoples and tongues, who were before the throne and in the presence of the Lamb, dressed in white clothes, and palms in his hands; And they cried aloud, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

A celestial being asked John, "Who are they?" And John replied, "Sir, you know." Then, he said, "These are they who have come from great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have whitened them in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they stand before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he who sits on the throne will spread his pavilion over them. They will no longer hunger, nor thirst, and the sun will fall no more on them, nor any other heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and

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will lead them to living fountains of waters: and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. "

Those who were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who remained in the faith until the end of their days, are before the throne of God with the angels. One day, we will also be in the celestial choir. Therefore, every Sunday we anticipate that day in the liturgy.

Our psalm for today, Psalm 149, also speaks of the people of God as saints. The word is חַסִּדִּים (hasidim), which means the righteous, the faithful, who walk with the Lord. In the New Testament, we find a Greek word translated as saints. It is ἁγίους (hagious), as in 1 Corinthians 16: 1, "As for the collection for the saints, do you also as I ordained in the churches of Galatia," because the churches in Galatia collected an offering for the saints in Jerusalem, that is, the afflicted Christians of Jerusalem.

We confess in the Apostolic Creed, our belief in the Holy Spirit and the communion of the saints. Because the communion of the saints is the communion of the Holy Spirit, now on earth and in heaven too. All the faithful in Christ are saints. Today we celebrate and honour the saints who have passed into glory and eternal life.

Our Lutheran church says this about the invocation and veneration of the saints in the heavens. This is Article XXI of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

"Our Confession approves honours to the saints. Because a triple honour must be approved here. The first is thanksgiving. Because we must give thanks to God because He has shown examples of mercy; because He has shown that He wants to save men; because He has given teachers or other gifts to the Church. And these gifts, like the

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greatest ones, must be amplified, and the saints themselves should be praised, who have faithfully used these gifts, just as Christ praises faithful businessmen, 5 Matthew 25:21. 23. The second service is the strengthening of our faith; When we see that the denial has been forgiven to Peter, we are also encouraged to believe that the more grace truly surmountable sin, Rom. 5, 20. The third honour is the imitation, first, of faith, then of the other virtues, which each one must imitate according to his vocation. These true honours our opponents do not require. They argue only about the invocation, which, although it would not have any danger, nevertheless is not necessary. "

There is only one mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ. We do not invoke or pray to the saints in heaven, nor the Virgin Mary, nor the angels. However, we honour them, also our parents, teachers or any other person God has given us as models of faith.

Well, in our gospel for today, the word translated as "blessed" is μακάριος (makarios). With this word, the Lord refers to all the saints. This entire passage is a comparison between us saints on earth and those who are in heaven.

Here on earth, we are poor in spirit or humble people. Those who have passed from this life have received the kingdom of God.

Among the problems and challenges of this world, we cry. But in heaven, God God has wiped every tear from their eyes

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall receive the land for an inheritance. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God. "

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What does it mean, the saints in heaven have received everything that God has promised us? We walk in darkness, they in pure light. In the following verses, the Lord speaks in detail about our struggle.

"Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall reproach you and persecute you, and shall speak every evil thing of you for my sake, lying. Enjoy and rejoice; for your worship is great in heaven: for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. "

The joy of being in the presence of God is worth the pain of all the problems and afflictions of this life. And not as the church in Rome says: We only know that someone is with God because of prayers and miracles in his name and the rest are in purgatory. For every faithful believer, all the promises of God were fulfilled immediately after physical death.

This promise is sure and in this, we have the hope and the peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.