

All Saints' Day

November 1, 2005

Ecclesiasticus 44: 1-10,13-14

Psalm 149

Revelation 7:2-4,9-17

Matthew 5:1-12

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Faces – many, many faces – young and old, smooth and wrinkled, male and female – all looking up in expectation – eyes fixed on Jesus, ears straining to hear His words.

Jesus sits apart – not far – on a hillside, and He looks out upon those faces, and, perhaps, He sighs.

He sighs because He knows them so very well – not by their names but by their hearts. His eyes see to their very souls. It's all so very plain to Him – their hopes and dreams; their pains and sorrows; their moments of happiness.

Those faces might well be ours tonight. We all bring our innermost selves to His presence, and we all strain to hear His words of guidance and comfort.

He speaks. He speaks straight to their hearts and to ours – your heart and mine. He speaks to all people for all time, all who have striven and still strive to live in God's Kingdom here and now. He speaks to the righteous and the merciful – to those who make peace in a most unrighteous, unforgiving and dangerous world. He speaks to the

meek and to the persecuted. He speaks to the mighty and to the meek – the great and famous and the nameless and faceless. And this is what He says:

There is a place – there will be a time – when all your pains and sorrows – your discomforts and cares – will be no more. Hold fast to your faith – live as you know God would have you live – and that time and that place are yours. No one is nameless and faceless in the presence of God.

What, or who, is a saint? Thomas Merton, in a tiny book called *The Seeds of Contemplation* wrote, “. . . even the small yellow flowers by the roadside, lifting their faces to God, are one with the saints.” Saints are those men and women, known and unknown, whose faces are ever turned upward to the throne of God, whose eyes see Him, whose ears hear Him, and whose lives reflect Him. Some have suffered for that; some suffer now. Some have been exalted; many, many have not.

The promise is to them all. The reward is great in heaven. “The lamb in the midst of the throne will be your shepherd to guide you to springs of living water; and God Himself will wipe away every tear from your eyes.”

In His Holy Name.