

Solemnity of All Saints

November 1, 2005

Rev 7:2-4, 9-14

Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

I Jn 3:1-3

Mt 5:1-12a

Stephen J. Baker, O.S.A.

Anytime I walk into a Church, my eyes are immediately drawn to the stained glass windows. I like to see who is depicted in these windows. The windows are a glimpse into the heroes and heroines of a particular local community. Here at Malvern Prep, our campus chapel celebrates in its windows some of our Augustinian heroes. When we gather for worship as a believing community, we are seated in the midst of our heroes and heroines, the Saints, who are models and examples to us of a life lived faithfully. We are surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses.” This image provides for me feelings of comfort and peace.

This is what we celebrate today on the feast of All Saints. We celebrate, as the opening prayers suggests, the holy men and women of every time and place. We celebrate the lives of ordinary men and women lived in an extraordinary way in faithfulness to the message of the gospel. These men and women are teachers and preachers; they are founders of religious orders and scholars. They are married persons, missionaries, and martyrs. They come from all walks of life and from various parts of the globe. They are ours. They belong to us. They show us how to live faithfully the Beatitudes that Jesus once again teaches us in today’s gospel. These saintly men and women are indeed blessed because they lived out in their own time and place this blueprint for Christian living. We, too, will be blessed if we follow in their footsteps.

As we gather for the Eucharist on this holy day, we might do well to remember that the Eucharist we celebrate is the very same Eucharist that sustained our saintly brothers and sisters in their journey of faith. In the Eucharist they found their strength, courage, and comfort to continue on the road which God had opened up before them. It is in our celebration of this very same Eucharist that these gifts of faith will be ours.

As we reflect on the mystery of this beautiful feast, we are reminded in our first reading from the Book of Revelation that if we are faithful, our joy will be similar to the multitude from every nation, race, people, and tongue. We will stand before the throne, as they do now, to give everlasting praise and glory to our God.