

## **A Devotion for the week of All Saint's Day - 1st November 2020**

*This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for the use of others who are interested.*

**INTRODUCTION** In some places in Australia there is a developing tradition of celebrating Halloween. Halloween is actually the old commemoration of All Hallows Eve, the day or evening before All Saint's Day. It is a tradition that dates from the time of belief in hobgoblins, ghouls and the suchlike. Today, the festival as celebrated in the United States of America only gives a glimpse of the ancient fear of the spirits of the departed. All Saints Day is much more worthy of celebration. It is a time when we remember those good people who helped influence our Faith, our Church, and our Nation for the better. We also remember those people who helped to influence our own lives and helped us to become better people.

**HYMN** No. -

*You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.*

**PRAYER :** We thank you, O God for all of the people you have put in our paths that have helped to influence us for the better. For our parents and our grand-parents who helped us to develop when we were children. For the school teachers we remember with fondness, who cared about us and about our future. And for our friends who cared for us and we were able to care for in return. Help us to continue to practice the sorts of good behaviours that those people taught us. We thank you too for those people who have been an example to the whole world, from the Apostles to Ghandi, Mother Theresa and Flynn of the Inland. Help us to remember their lives and the principles they lived by that made such a difference. May all of these saints inspire us to live better lives in your service, O Lord. In Jesus name, Amen

**HYMN** No. -

**BIBLE READING** - Today's reading is the beatitudes as found in Matthew 5 : 1 - 12

**REFLECTION**

In the Beatitudes, Jesus is talking to his disciples and also to all of the ordinary people who have gathered to listen. The beatitudes, or blessings are for the ordinary people, not the kind of people we tend to think of as the great saints. Jesus was not blessing the Apostles who established the Church, or the greats like St Augustine or St Benedict who established monastic systems. He was not even blessing the great theologians such as St Paul or Martin Luther who helped us to think more clearly about God. Jesus was speaking to the ordinary people, the meek, the bereaved and the persecuted.

To start with, Jesus refers to people who have had a difficult time in life, then he moves on to people who are really trying to do the best they can, people who are trying to follow God and live life the way they should. There is no judgement on the success of their efforts. In most cases there is no promise of a reward on earth, but they will be rewarded by God in ways that are most important to them.

Rather than celebrating only the great saints, today we celebrate all the saints. We celebrate those everyday saints who might think of themselves as poor in spirit. People who have their doubts, people who don't see themselves as people of strong faith or great works, but still persevere and keep

following and keep doing, even when the spirit seems poor. Jesus promised that God's blessing, God's special care and favour would be on those people. Not just the poor in spirit but many others as well. God's blessing would also be on those who mourn the loss of loved ones and those who are meek and downtrodden or oppressed. God would bless those who are denied righteousness or justice and those who work for righteousness and justice for others, as well as those who show mercy, leniency and understanding to others. He will bless those who work for peace between people and between nations, and lastly, those who suffer in some way because they are trying to do what is right or trying to show others what is right.

You can probably think of ordinary people that you know, who are included in one of those descriptions we mentioned. You may have even found yourself described in one or more of those groups. Our God is not just the God of the great and notable people. Our God blesses and cares for the ordinary everyday people. God will bless the ordinary everyday saints who have helped you along your life's journey, and God will bless you as well, as you try to be a true Christian today,

HYMN No. -

#### PRAYER

We thank you O Lord for all the opportunities you give us throughout our lives. Thank you for the rewarding times we have had and for those times when we have been able to help others. We pray for those who have a low opinion of themselves, for those who are bereaved, and for those who are oppressed. Bless those who suffer injustice and for those who show forgiveness towards others, to the peacemakers and the persecuted. We pray for the sick and those who care for them. We pray for our country and our own state, that our governing officials may be able to see the best path forward and follow it. We pray for our families and we pray for ourselves, that we may have peace and confidence in our faith in you, and we pray together:

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No -

#### The BLESSING

And may the blessing of the almighty God,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be upon you and remain with you always, Amen