

**FEAST OF ALL SAINTS (31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time) (10/31-11/1/2009)**

*Revelation 7/2-14, Psalm 24, 1 John 3/1-3, Matthew 5/1-12*

For sports fans everywhere, baseball is finally coming to a conclusion!  
Football reigns right now, as hockey and basketball emerge from their long hibernation.  
As for golf, at last report, Tiger is resting for the winter.  
A lot of people could care less, but real sports fans are an ubiquitous and persistent bunch.  
The secular calendar, for many people, is marked by the games we play.  
Sports are a constant in American life, for good or not so good.

There are other “constants” which have nothing to do with sports.  
One of them is this Feast of All Saints celebrated by the Church every year.  
It is really the feast of all who have reached heaven, and the feast-in-waiting for the rest of us who have  
heaven as a goal, perhaps THE goal.  
So the church wishes to remind us what it is all about.

No better Scripture passage could be chosen for this feast than the introduction to the Sermon on the  
Mount in *Matthew's* Gospel account of Jesus' life and ministry.  
Jesus begins his ministry in *Matthew* with this long (three chapter) instructional sermon on what  
constitutes the spiritual life.  
The Beatitudes come first in the Sermon, and, though we may not be able to rattle them off from  
memory, these invocations presented by Jesus are very familiar to many of us.  
Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for  
righteousness, the merciful, the clean of heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted!

Look at that line-up of “blessed” people; they are the least likely to be called “blessed” or “fortunate” by  
most sane readers.  
Much of the Sermon on the Mount is unexpected, almost as if Jesus wants to let us know that what we  
see may not be what we get at all! And just be ready!  
I would like to suggest that you pick up your Bible and read chapters 5 to 7 from *Matthew*, all the way  
through at one sitting.  
It's powerful.  
In a way, it presents Jesus' agenda for his own life - and the agenda he offers us for our lives too.

“Are you ready for Monday night football?” the promo blasts out.  
Are we ready for Jesus' message of paradox and parable and metaphor and God's will?  
Blessed are these “little” people whom the world ignores and Jesus extols.  
They are not so little in God's eyes.  
Nor are you “little” in the routines and “constants” of your life.

Jesus has “big” plans for all of us – a life of *active* love and effective peace and total forgiveness here,  
and the hope of happiness forever with God Himself.  
This feast purportedly marks the coming end of the liturgical year; actually, it is more like a beginning,  
an invitation to life, to God's life here on earth.  
Blessed are you, and may you be strong in your faith!