

November 1 2020

All Saints Sunday

Today is the day that we gather to honour and remember all the saints. Those who in death have joined the Church Triumphant in heaven. Then there is you and I who serve Christ here on earth. Our Lord's resurrection was the event that took us from sinners to saints. Luther would later state that all Christians are both sinner and saint at the same time. We are sinners due to our rebellious nature and saints because of the salvation given to us by Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.

IN our services we profess that we believe in the communion of saints. Yet many times we just repeat the words not fully knowing the reality and intention they contain. The teaching concerning the communion of saints is the idea that all of God's people, in heaven and earth, are spiritually connected and united.

So what is it that connects us and unites us with those who have gone before us. You may be shocked to learn that it is what we do as a community on Sunday mornings. We worship, praise and give thanks to God. When we worship God as a community we are linked to the saints in heaven who are continually worshipping God. The worship in heaven never ends though. John's writing in Revelations gives us an insight of what is to come when we are called home. "After this I looked and beheld a great multitude that no one could number, before the Lamb. Clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to Our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb,". And all the angels were standing

around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying, Amen! Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to Our God.”

Our worship here on earth is similar to theirs in heaven. Many of the liturgies we use today on Sunday morning are based on the Book of Revelation. Our worship is much shorter in length. Worshipping the Lamb of God is what unites heaven and earth. All the saints in heaven and those of us here are united in this act. Yet do we ever stop to think of what we are about to enter into as we climb the stairs on Sunday morning? What we do here is so interwoven and connected with the Divine Praises offered around the Lord’s Throne. Thinking about it does put a respectful fear and awe in oneself. It is humbling at the same time.

During services on Sunday there is a mixing of the two realities because they are connected and interwoven. At the prelude before the institution, we acknowledge the presence of the angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim that are around the altar as we worship. Fortunately we are unable to see them with our physical eyes. I think if we could actually see the realities that are happening as we worship on Sunday many of us could not handle it. That is why we cannot see it. There are times when this reality can be felt in one’s spirit. Regardless we are reminded that it is there and does play out as we worship. We are also reminded that our prayers are certainly carried upward and heard in the heavenly courts.

It is at communion where we are linked with heaven and the communion of saints. The altar is the focal point where this occurs.

The altar is the meeting place between us and Our Lord Jesus. At the words of institution, we are brought back to the upper room on Maundy Thursday. It is these words that change bread and wine into the body and blood of Our Lord. We find our communion with the saints in heaven and here on earth through Jesus Christ Our Lamb. We consume His presence in the bread and wine and make Him part of our being. The saints above bask in His actual presence. That is why communion is so important because of the reality and intent it expresses. There is so much to ponder and think about and we have just scratched the surface.

Next time we profess the creed, think about the depth of reality and intention contained in those seven words. I believe in the communion of saints. They contain an earthly and heavenly reality rooted in Our Lamb. When we gather to worship those two realities actually mix on Sunday morning. The altar is so much more than a mere table. It is there that we meet the Lord.

God Bless, stay safe, Pastor D