

November 1, 2020, All Saints' Day (Year A)  
*For All the Saints*

**Matthew 5:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:  
<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>4</sup>"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
<sup>5</sup>"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.  
<sup>6</sup>"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. .  
<sup>7</sup>"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.  
<sup>8</sup>"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
<sup>9</sup>"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.  
<sup>10</sup>"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
<sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber wrote, "All true living is meeting," this was a hard lesson to encounter in the year my grandmother died, my sister spent months hovering between life and death in intensive care, and then my mother died. I didn't want to meet anyone because every hello has a goodbye in it. My mother finally had to come to me in a dream saying, "I cannot be happy unless you are happy," for the fear of fresh encounters to diminish. While I joke that if weird stuff never happened I'd be out of a job the notion that we are never truly disconnected from the people we love is among the odd things that defy explanation. Consequently, every goodbye carries a hello in it. Today is marked as the Feast of All Saints. In much of the Christian world, this is the church's memorial day. It is fitting that we should celebrate communion on this day because it is for us a participation in the great banquet of life that surrounds Jesus Christ. Around the table are not just all our fellow Christians alive today but all who came before us, that cloud of saints. Anyone who has ever joined in sharing bread and wine here still gathers at this celebration of life. We have tangible reminders of them in the quiet grass and stones surrounding us here, but they are not here; they are alive in God's presence. Because God is with us they are with us.

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My grandmother's words, "you have more to fear from the living than you do from the dead," point us to the work at hand. In this moment we have facility to do good or evil while those who surround us in spirit have had their day and now rest, still connected, still encouraged by the good we manage to do. We are different, being living saints, only in the ability to act. This is the process of incarnation. We are privileged to take what are ideas and spiritual things and make them real in the world, just as we are real in the world. You have or are about to receive a letter from our stewardship coordinators and I ask you to consider how you can make incarnation happen. We can use our substance to make the church real for many who need to see, be seen and hear the good news that those saints surrounding us heard.

Martin Buber also wrote "When we encounter another individual truly as a person, not as an object for use, we become fully human:" So much of our world is centered on what you can do for me, but we are committed to see the value of each human as God sees us. The message of today's scripture gets lost in the noise humans using one another as tools rather than ends. Those out there created for us a place to come and be valued for who we are. Now we have an opportunity to make this a place of welcome while we live.