

Sunday, November 1, 2020

All Saints Day, Year A

XXI. Concerning the Cult of the Saints¹

Concerning the cult of the saints our people teach that the saints are to be remembered so that we may strengthen our faith when we see how they experienced grace and how they were helped by faith. Moreover, it is taught that each person, according to his or her calling, should take the saints' good works as an example. For instance, His Imperial Majesty, in a salutary and righteous fashion, may follow the example of David in waging war against the Turk. For both hold a royal office that demands defense and protection of their subjects.

However, it cannot be demonstrated from Scripture that a person should call upon the saints or seek help from them. "For there is only one single reconciler and mediator set up between God and humanity, Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 2). He is the only savior, the only high priest, the mercy seat, and intercessor before God (Rom. 8). He alone has promised to hear our prayers. According to Scripture, in all our needs and concerns it is the highest worship to seek and call upon this same Jesus Christ with our whole heart. "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous ..." [1 John 2].

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

¹ Philip Melancton, English translation of Article XXI of the German text of the Augsburg Confession, found on page 58 of [The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church](#).

First Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

⁹After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²singing,

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and might
be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” ¹⁴I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.

¹⁶They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them,
nor any scorching heat;

¹⁷for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Here ends the First Reading.

Psalm: Psalm 43

- ¹Give judgment for me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people;
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
- ²For you are the God of my strength; why have you rejected me,
and why do I wander in such gloom
while the enemy oppresses me?
- ³Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me,
and bring me to your holy hill and to your sanctuary;
- ⁴that I may go to the altar of God,
to the God of my joy and gladness;
and on the harp I will give thanks to you, O God my God.
- ⁵Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul,
and why are you so disquieted within me?
Put your trust in God,
for I will yet give thanks to the one who is my help and my God.

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Here ends the Second Reading.

Gospel: Matthew 23:1-12

The Good News according to Matthew, the 23rd chapter

¹Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. ⁹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

This is the Gospel of Our Lord.