

Rev. 7:9-17 Ps. 34:1-10,22 1 Jn. 3:1-3 Mt. 5:1-12

In the name of the Master weaver, a seamless interwoven tapestry of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. *Amen*

"Knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ." This Collect so beautifully distills the essence of All Saints', a day to pause and remember our inherited tradition dating back to at least the 4th century. More importantly, we remember that we are joined together, all saints: past, present, and yet to come who are clothed in the transfiguring light and love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

And what exactly makes us saints anyway? Is it a decree by the Pope? Is it a tribute in Holy Women, Holy Men? A page from Lesser Feasts and Fasts? Saints are simply God's holy people, God's children; attempting to walk in the way of Christ our Lord; some more successfully than others perhaps, but God gives A+ for effort!

If we take a cue from Jesus preaching the sermon on the mount, the Beatitudes or "Blessings" he points to attributes that are diametrically opposed to how the world measures glory and 'sainthood'. The humble inherit the earth. Those who have suffered impoverishment, loss, and persecution are much closer to sainthood than the power-hungry, wealth and fame chasers.

On a day pause to remember those gone before us, who've searched and reached for Christ to guide, guard and light the way, one beatitude in particular leaps out, especially in this unprecedented time of pandemic: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

One can only arrive at mourning, sorrow, and grief, if love has been present. But love never disappears, even though we be separated physically from one who has journeyed onward into the next phase of life, we are bonded together in the mystical body of the communion of saints. We get glimpses now and then to reassure us of this truth. Scripture consoles us and reaffirms this undying connection.

In the 1st letter of John, we hear, "Beloved, 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." (1 Jn 3:2) We've been given 'sneak previews' in theophanies, when God reveals God's self and glory.

These moments always seem to involve light: guiding stars, a light in a stable, a blinding light on the road to Damascus for a former Pharisee previously called Saul, and The Transfiguration on the mountain peak, to name a few. November 1st, All Saints, likewise is also understood as a thin time, when we lean into this mystical communion.

One of my favorite saints on the other side, Henri Nouwen suggests that "as saints, we belong to that large network of God's people that shines like a multitude of stars in the dark sky of the universe." (Nov. 11, Bread for the Journey, 1985)

St. Paul, who as you just heard, knew a thing or two about this radical life-altering, knock-you-off-your-

horse kind of light writes in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians, "All of us, with our unveiled faces like mirrors reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the image that we reflect in brighter and brighter glory; this is the working of the Lord who is the Spirit. When Jesus removes the veil for us, our inner transformation and renewal becomes outwardly visible, pointing others to the transfiguring source.

Jesus' radiance came from a place much deeper than his skin or clothing. It emanated out of the depths of his being, originating out of God's love transcending limitations of flesh; penetrating the abyss of our souls. If we picture once again, Jesus on the mountaintop, transfigured before Peter, James, and John, "while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them." (Mt 17:2; Lk 9:29; Mk 9:3)

I especially like the way Mark clarifies that the whiteness of Jesus' clothes, was way beyond anything any mortal could manufacture! Just as I imagine likewise, the white robes of the saints spoken of in Revelation, has nothing to do with pigment, but light! God is light! Manifest for us in creation.

For God, the lightness of day and darkness of night are both alike but for us humanly creatures, the nearest we can get to expressing that light, in terms of garb anyway, is to symbolize it in a robe of white; and variations thereon – weddings gowns, for instance!

If we remember that we are born of stars, then it's easy to make this connection of our communion with the saints, points of light throughout eternity! That's why as a priest, I wear white at a funeral, Because we are pointing to the light of the Resurrection! Life beyond life!!

We are brought together in the seamless tunic woven by the Master Weaver. Can we grasp this incomprehensible fabric, a garment of pure love crafted by the Holy Spirit, weaving and interlocking each one of us; a unique thread, superior to gold and silver, that binds us together; a kaleidoscope of all peoples, nations, tribes?

I shared during a meeting this week, that I'm fascinated by kaleidoscopes; in the way they can create infinite patterns of color through a prism of light. I sometimes think about that as a metaphor- for the way God holds all things within this container of love, but which is never finite nor predictable. And how boring would it be anyway, for God and us too, to be uniform and homogenous? God created bio-diversity for a reason, for health and wholeness and inspiration! Literally too, like it helps us breathe!

I've been contemplating the exquisite awesomeness of the wonders that God has created, thinking about the variety alone of all God's children, speckled across the continuum of color and tone, white to black, light to dark and every variation inbetween, this seamless garment blending harmoniously.

This contemplation intersected with thoughts I'd been puzzling about earlier this week, after Ann's Tuesday meditation and her observation over the predilection of much of society to choose white for religious and cultural life markers: baptisms, weddings, sacraments, and so on.

White is seen as symbolic of purity, goodness and health. White picket fences enclose our dwellings, white churches with steeples dot the New England landscape.

After further reflecting (pardon the pun) on the association with heavenly garb reflecting the glory of God, I concluded that it has less to do with pigment and more about light; the desire for white makes sense in that we want to bring more of that divine light into our lives and dwelling spaces.

As Ann noted, when you break down light through a prism, it contains all wavelengths of color! But no amount of bleaching as Mark says, and no amount of white paint (as I say) can truly give us that feeling or closeness of God's radiance. Only love can.

Do we not believe and are in agreement with the communion of saints, past, present and yet to come? Are they not clothed with the light of Christ? Do we not all wear the seamless robe of God- even in this present moment, in all of our brokenness, division, anxiety, uncertainty?

How are we to add to this garment, engineered by God? How will we strengthen the weave of the fabric? Can we appreciate the beauty of God's intricate handiwork, preserve and if necessary, defend the tunic made of faith, as did the white-robed martyrs who surround the throne worshiping and praising God unceasingly?

Will I accept the risks of walking with the saints in God? How do I still love those who reject the multi-colored wisdom of God, and who are bedazzled by the claims of false idols and gods, and who may not even be aware that the veil must be removed to see the face of God?

The Saints of the ages past, present and future live for the sake of the seamless garment of Christ. It is THE Robe to wear to the Wedding Feast! Don't be caught without it, friend...

When Jesus gave his life, redeeming sinner and saint, the forces of evil in death are vanquished forever. The tunic remains woven against all that would destroy it; It is woven of diversity against adversity. It is a coat of many colors. A tunic woven of rainbow light. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

John of Patmos saw it: "I looked... and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb... "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal... In the shelter of the one seated on the throne.... they will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat." The Lamb is their Shepherd; "guiding them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Rev. 7:14-17)

This is the fabric of salvation, the vision of God. It is shelter and protection. It is comfort and sustenance. It is unity and completeness. It is Jesus: moved by compassion, among the crowds desperate for hope. "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God." (1 Jn 3:1)

We are fed by the love of God,  
comforted by the love of God,  
empowered and strengthened by the love of God,  
forgiven and renewed by the love of God,  
bathed and clothed by the love of God,  
blessed by the love of God.  
God has given us the gifts, the call, the possibility...  
to become weavers, all of us to knit one another together,  
all God's children into one body;  
one humanity, one seamless tunic.  
And all God's people say...

Amma Susan+