

Service - 11-01-20
Ps 34; Rev 7:9-17; 1 Jn 3:1-3; Mt 5:1-10
All Saints Sunday

Imagine a physicist trying to do science without mathematics. Or, imagine someone who is tone-deaf trying to be a music critic. In the same way, trying to learn about Jesus Christ cannot be done without spiritual discernment. Natural things take us only so far. We need become aware and acknowledge the supernatural. To understand and share the Gospel – the good news – it doesn't work to start from "God cannot become flesh or save humanity from sin." (Tom Oden, *The Word of Life*, Harper, San Francisco, 1989, p 528) We must include this spiritual premise: **Jesus Christ, fully God, fully human.** Otherwise, we are like a potter without clay – or a mathematician without numbers. The patriarch Enoch "walked steadily with God. And then one day he was simply gone: God took him." (Gen 5:MSG) Faith like Enoch's is pleasing to God. There is evidence to approach and answer many questions.

Our Scriptures today help us center on our Savior Jesus Christ – 1) Where He is – 2) His Character – and as much as we can, 3) His Appearance (seeing Him as He is). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God". (Ro 10:17) The Word is continually being proclaimed all through the cosmos. There is a divine call going out to tune in to the things of God and seek shelter in Him – receive from Him spiritual food and drink – seek shade from the heat of the sun – follow this Shepherd who is the Lamb. Follow Him to springs of the water of Life.

Where is Jesus? Saint John of Patmos has given us this stunning scene around the throne of God. We hear, we see, that John was taken to heaven in a vision. He sees the Lamb of God in the center of the throne. Around the throne are the saints – a multitude robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They are singing praise. The angels are there. The twenty-four elders are there. And, the four living creatures are there: the eagle, the man, the ox and the lion.

We don't know whether this place where Jesus is – is actually "up" or not. It may be in another dimension or another string or another sphere. But it is a place where Jesus, risen from death, lives in the flesh – a human being who is God, resurrected to new, glorious life. He is not swimming in time like us. He has resumed His eternal life in the heavenly place.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that priests cannot pray for us at all times because they are mortal and pass away. "But, Jesus, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore, He is able also to save forever anybody who draws near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (Heb 7:24-25) He is on the throne, and He is praying continually for you and me – and all the saints.

Scripture says Jesus is at the right hand of His Heavenly Father. John of Patmos saw it. Stephen, deacon of the Jerusalem church, saw it when he was being stoned to death. The Gospel writers know it. Paul and the other writers of the letters in the New Testament also bear witness that Jesus is at the right hand of God. John says that the Lamb, Jesus, the Word of God is "in the center of the throne."

What is the character of Jesus Christ? We have today His take on the Law. In His divine authority He blesses anybody who has:

- Poverty of spirit
- Mourning (for the world)
- Gentleness
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Purity of heart
- Peacemaking
- Accepting persecution for holding to the right
- And for your faith in Christ

Wonderful blessings come to the ones who seek to be like our Savior. The beatitudes reveal Jesus' remarkable, peaceable,

(Continued on next page.)

divine character.

We have asked: Where is Jesus? What is Jesus' character? **What does it mean to see Jesus Christ as He is?**

He came into the world about 5 or 4 BC, and lived to about 30 or 33 AD. Jesus is not described physically in the Bible. He was a Semite – a Jew – very likely with dark hair and skin. He wore traditional clothes: a robe over a garment like a tunic, and sandals.

The Prophet Isaiah says, "...he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him." (Is 53:2).

When John saw Jesus in a divine vision, he described Him this way:

"His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters." (Rev 1:14-15)

In his first letter to the churches, John comments on the day yet to come when each person and creature on the planet will see Jesus.

Eugene Peterson's version of John's letter:

"What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to.

But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own." (1 Jn 3:1-3 MSG)

When the Lord Jesus returns physically to our world, everybody will be able to see Him. A great resurrection will take place in His presence. His true followers will rise and go to meet Him. He will bring us with Him and establish His kingdom here forever. All the saints will be able to look into His face and see Him just as He is. Amen