

WEDNESDAY PRAYER

(Next Sunday we celebrate the Feast of All Saints)

27th October, 2021

Psalm 138

O Lord, you search me and you know me,
you know my resting and my rising, you discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down, all my ways lie open to you.
Before ever a word is on my tongue
you know it, O Lord, through and through.
Behind and before you besiege me, your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge, too high, beyond my reach.
If I take the wings of the dawn and dwell at the sea's furthest end,
even there your hand would lead me,
your right hand would hold me fast.
For it was you who created my being,
knit me together in my mother's womb.
I thank you for the wonder of my being,
for the wonders of all your creation.

LITANY OF PRAISE:

Our response to our prayers of praise:

We praise you, Lord, for the wonders of all your creation!

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 5:1-12

How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy the gentle; they shall have the earth for their heritage. Happy those who mourn; they shall be comforted. Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied. Happy the merciful; they shall have mercy shown to them. Happy the pure in heart; they shall see God. Happy the peacemakers; they shall be called the sons of God. Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are you when people abuse and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. *The Gospel of the Lord.*

REFLECTION: ALL SAINTS' DAY (St. Bernard of Clairvaux)

Why should our praise and glorification, or even our celebration of this feast day mean anything to the saints? What do they care about earthly honours when their heavenly Father honours them by fulfilling the faithful promise of his Son? What does our commemoration mean to them? The saints have no need of honour from us; neither does our devotion add the slightest thing to what is already theirs. Clearly, when we venerate their memory, it is serving us, not them. But I tell you, when I think of them, I feel myself inflamed by a tremendous longing to be with them.

Calling the saints to mind inspires, or rather arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company, which is desirable in itself. We long to share in the citizenship of heaven, to dwell with the spirits of the blessed, to join the assembly of the patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the council of apostles, the great host of martyrs, the noble company of confessors and the choir of virgins. In short, we long to be united in happiness with all the saints. But our dispositions change. The Church of all the first followers of Christ awaits us, but we do nothing about it. The saints want us to be with them, and we are indifferent. The souls of the just await us, and we ignore them.

Come, let us at length spur ourselves on. We must rise again with Christ, we must seek the world which is above and set our mind on the things of heaven. Let us long for those who are longing for us, hasten to those who are waiting for us, and ask those who look for our coming to intercede for us. We should not only want to be with the saints, we should also hope to possess their happiness. While we desire to be in their company, we must also earnestly seek to share in their glory. Do not imagine that there is anything harmful in such an ambition as this; there is no danger in setting our hearts on such glory.

INTERCESSIONS: Lord, in your mercy . . . Hear our prayer

CLOSING PRAYER: We thank you, God, for the saints of all ages, for those who in times of darkness kept the lamp of faith burning; for the great souls who saw visions of larger truth and dared to declare it; for the multitude of quiet and gracious souls whose presence has purified and sanctified the world, and for those known and loved by us who have passed from this earthly fellowship into the fuller light of life with you.

