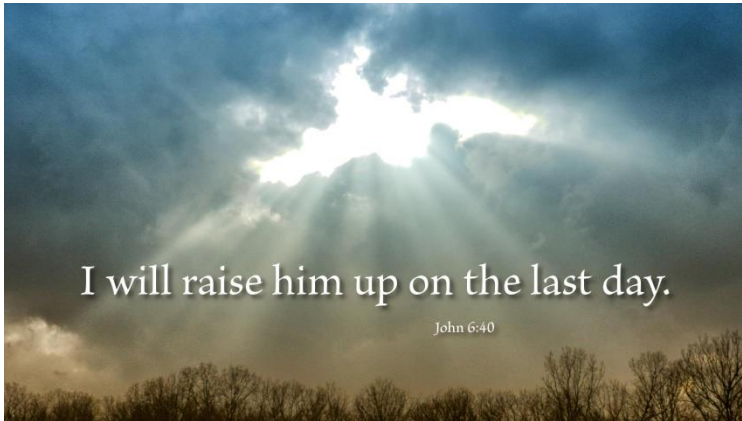




ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY August 12 & BEYOND”

“And I will raise him up at the last day”



Over the last few weeks I have been considering and re-considering what music I would appreciate if I were sitting at my own funeral. Before I sat down to write this reflection I was doing the same thing, and I’m still listening to some of the music as I write.

Over the years I have learned how valuable it has been to families in their fresh grieving over the loss of someone close to have had that loved one plan out some of the details of their Requiem Mass. Call it what you will – funeral, memorial service, Burial Office, celebration of life – but the kind of forethought for this service of life closure is an incredible gift to the family. And it is quite the gift to your priest or pastor, too!! It would be good right now to call up or email or text your spiritual director, whomever they might be, and make an appointment to do just that. If you walk into that appointment prepared with at least a couple of pieces of music/hymns/songs, and perhaps ready to consider some of what could be read from the bible, it won’t take you more than an hour to walk out with some peace of mind.

And while you are there, don’t hesitate to have an even more vulnerable conversation about who you are in God, in Christ, and perhaps who you need to be! We do indeed want to be able to commend your soul into the hands of God.

The reading from the Gospel for this coming Sunday, August 12, lends itself to this reflection. Jesus said, “All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out..... For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” In fact, that last line is part of a refrain from a hymn and popular song used often at Requiem Masses, “and I will raise them up on Eagle’s wings...”

And this becomes the central point of what we do and say and read at our funerals, that we DO know what our relationship with God is exactly. We want to make our last and final testimony to the One to whom we have given our lives, and who has

rescued us from this fateful world. Our funeral is best when pointed to the grace and glory and beauty and mercy of this God who saves us. I always encourage families to make sure that more than half of what we do at such a gathering is about our celebration of the life of Jesus Christ, without whom we would have no life at all! In the same Gospel for Sunday, Jesus would go on to say again this very thing, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him....I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever."

I believe fully, based on this scripture of promise alone, that we CAN know if we have been rescued from the wages of sin by Christ by faith in him, by our devotion, by our being in Communion with him, even in receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus. These all go together, of course, but together they provide an assurance to that old lie, "You can't really know if you are going to heaven."

The gathering then at the death of a loved one is a moment of SEVERAL considerations, emotions and certainties. We are grieving, in that we are sensing in many cases a loss, perhaps abandonment, just sadness. We are recognizing that it has been in THIS world we grew to enjoy, and appreciate, and love this person, despite a world of unfairness and pain. We recognize the victories and strengths of THIS life in the image of God found in this person as we have come to know them, setting aside whatever flaws, inconsistencies, and hurts that may have been engendered. And we are recognizing these same qualities and characteristics and empathies in God our Father himself, as he has both considered us as his creation, and as he has brought an amazing victory over death itself, that we might rise with him, Jesus being the first fruit of that victory over death.

All of that goes into our planning. You can have a hand in assisting your family by thinking through all these things now. You will have something to say about your humility as one of God's children, about your love for those being left behind, about your own perhaps quirky personality, but ultimately that you want others to know at that service that nothing in this life will ever match up to the glories of being in that new life with Christ forever.

Let me share briefly what music I was listening to. I was considering some choices I had already written down last week, like Samuel Barber's "Agnus Dei", the vocal version he wrote later after having found a great public appreciation for his "Adagio for Strings" -- that would be nice just before the administration of Holy Communion. Also the movement named "O Nata Lux", from a larger Requiem work by Morten Lauridsen. But then I noticed a link to the music of Erik Satie on the source to which I was listening. I remembered then the influence early on in my life from his "Trois Gymnopedie" that formed my musical thinking (listen to it, it's very simple and melodic), and thought that might be a nice way to provide some

prelude music before my Requiem Mass gets started officially. Still brings a tear to my eye. And I like what “Oh when the saints” does for people at a funeral. Oh, this won’t be easy making a few choices!

I’m still thinking about how to get Pharrell Williams’ “Happy” into it – maybe as people are walking into the reception afterward!

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: **The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)