



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 31 October 2021

All Saints Celebration

"I am the Alpha and the Omega." In God we find the beginning and end of all things, the one who will grant us eternal life. The more we search for God, the closer God draws to us. Let us continue that search together in faith.

Reflection for this week's Gospel

"Death will be no more." *Revelation 21:4*

An Illustration to set the scene

Sister Clare Crockett was an unlikely religious sister.

Born in 1982 in Derry, she was, in her teens, a **"party girl"** and aspiring actress – with real promise of success.

Although she was raised a Catholic she was not practising and felt no connection with God until, aged seventeen, she went on what she thought was a free youth holiday to Spain.

To her dismay, it was actually a youth pilgrimage, and during her search for sunshine, booze and boys she instead found God, during a Good Friday liturgy she begrudgingly attended.



Weeping shortly afterwards, she said, **“He died for me. He loves me! Why hasn’t anyone ever told me this before?”**

Despite this, Clare returned to pursue her career, but was herself **“pursued”** by God, who said to her, **“Why do you continue to hurt me?”**

Eventually, **“with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other”**, she told her friends she wanted to become a nun.

In disbelief, they tried to dissuade her, but she realised she had found **“a greater love”** and entered the **Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother**, with whom she served around the world until her untimely death in 2016, aged thirty-three, in an earthquake in Ecuador.

Earlier that very day, she had remarked, **“Why should I be afraid of death, if I’m going to go with the One I have longed to be with my whole life?”**

She is remembered by those who knew her as one who gave herself **“completely”** to the Lord.



Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

Jesus commands the dead Lazarus to come out of the tomb.

Lazarus is dead no more and, while this is more of a resuscitation than a resurrection (*as he will one day die again*), it is a miracle demonstrating that death has no power over Jesus.

In Isaiah's prophecy the Lord is preparing a **“feast of rich food” for all people and he will “swallow up death for ever”** (*a verse quoted by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians when he describes the mysterious change we all go through, from mortal to immortal*).

John's beautiful dream, described in Revelation, also gives us a prophecy of this: **“Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more”**.

These scriptures all show a clear expectation of a life with the Lord beyond death, a death that has lost its power.

Even if we are not perfect, or take our time to come to the Lord – as many of the saints do – there is salvation on offer to all people, whatever their background, whatever their sin, and without limit, because we can all share in Jesus' victory over death.

“The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,” says Isaiah.

**Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.
Isaiah 25:8**



How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

Sometimes we are nervous about talking of saints, reluctant to believe God might set certain individuals above mere mortals.

But this is a misunderstanding.

Sr Clare's awareness that Jesus had died for her **assured her she was destined to join him in heaven for all eternity.**

She was not perfect, but she responded to the call.

And the same assurance is on offer to all who believe and dedicate their lives to Jesus.

Saints are not limited to the "**celebrities**" of our stained-glass windows.

Today's great feast celebrates everybody who is in heaven, including many of our own relatives and friends who have gone before us, all of whom are there because they persevered throughout the difficulties of this life in faith.

All of them are saints;
our calling is to become like them.

During our lives we can choose to move either closer to God or further away.

We do not know, in and of ourselves, how to live clean and pure lives, beset as we are by sin.... But the saints, whether famous or otherwise, can show us the way.

Our prayers are joined with one another and with all those already in heaven, with whom we will share in Jesus' victory over death.

This is affirmed in the proper preface in today's Eucharistic prayer that we shall prayer in a few minutes:

**“As children of your redeeming purpose ...
called to attain with all your saints to the measure of the
stature of the fullness of Christ,
we offer you our praise, with angels and archangels....”**

“Death will be no more.”

Revelation 21:4



Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

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