

A Coffee with Alessio



All Saints

Lectionary:

First Reading: Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23(24):1-6

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12a

This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints. This day on the liturgical calendar is when we honour all those people who lived lives of faith in Christ and have gone to their heavenly reward, but have not been officially canonized by the Church. I'll come back to the solemnity later on, but I would like to begin this week's column with a story.

A Navy pilot was describing his complex helicopter to his parents one day. He told them that a small hexagonal nut held the main rotor to the mast of the helicopter.

"Guess what we call that nut?" he asked his mother. She could only shrug her shoulders. With a smile, the pilot answered his own question: "It's called a Jesus nut." That may sound irreverent, but here's an explanation. If that small piece of metal ever came off, the helicopter would not be able to stay in the air but would come crashing to the ground. So it's understandable why pilots in the Vietnam War gave that little part the name "Jesus nut."

The writer to the Hebrews said that Jesus, who made the world, upholds "all things by the word of His power" (1:3). Because of Him, we inhabit a created cosmos, not a chaotic accident. He who made all reality keeps it from collapsing.

We also need Jesus Christ as our Saviour from sin and as Lord of our everyday lives. He is the One who can lift us above the degrading forces of evil in our world. It is He and His Holy Spirit who make it possible for us to be saints.

If you feel as if your life is crashing down around you, remember that it's Jesus who holds all things together—even your life. (<https://odb.org/1999/09/11/a-jesus-nut/>)

The Gospel Reading for this Sunday is the Sermon on the Mount (the Beatitudes). The Jerusalem Bible begins each beatitude with the word "happy". I prefer the word used in other translations – "Blessed", which is the word that is used in many of the hymn settings of this text. After Jesus teaches about those who are blessed He names their reward (Sourcebook 2017). These Beatitudes again illustrate that our faith in Christ has two prongs, one of ritual, the other of service. Put another way, a prong of the head, and a prong of the heart. Our faith as Catholics demands that we participate in the ritual. However, it also requires us to live out the ritual through service after we leave the liturgy.

Jesus tells us that following Him will not be easy, and the world certainly frowns upon those of us who follow Christ. Yet, we must keep our eyes fixed on Christ. The Gospel Acclamation verse for All Saints' Day summarizes the work of the saints so well:

"Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened,
and I will give you rest, says the Lord."

Yes, the Saints worked with outstanding dedication to the Lord and neighbour. It was a labour of love that at times probably was burdensome. Yet, as we heard in the story, Jesus is what holds our life together, even in those times of crisis, just as the Jesus nut keeps everything together on the helicopter.

The same can apply to us in our daily lives. Some days we are just exhausted and then someone comes and needs something from us. Those moments provide us with opportunities to be saints because they challenge us beyond our limitations.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Canonization of Saint Mary MacKillop. As with all things this year, the celebrations were low-key due to Covid-19. However, we need to look to Saint Mary of the Cross for inspiration so that we too can become saints. Australia has a long way to go, to catch up to rest of the world for saints.

In my column a couple of weeks ago, I mentioned some musical suggestions for this Solemnity: For all the Saints and I sing a song of the Saints of God.

Since the Gospel is the Beatitudes, any setting of that text would be extremely suitable.

Coming back to the hymn: 'I sing a song of the saints of God': the last verse finishes with these two lines:

"for the saints of God are folk just like me,
and I mean to be one too."

Yes indeed, the saints were people like you and me. Let's strive to live lives of holiness and service, so that we will be saints one day too! Let's keep Jesus as the cornerstone of everything we do. Let him be the nut in our lives holding everything together for us, so that our lives will be a clear reflection of Christ, and that reflection will be seen in the world! Without Jesus, we are like the helicopter without the Jesus nut. The helicopter will come crashing down. Our lives will be a mess without Christ at the Centre of them.

As for a coffee this week, I'm taking a slight detour. We have been blessed with some glorious sunshine of late, so I took to having an ice cream in this glorious weather. Next to Spritz Restaurant in Mount Hawthorn is their gelateria, and their choc-mint was rather refreshing with the warm weather we had last weekend. That followed by a coffee, gave me an opportunity to give thanks to God for all the blessings we have received, and to spend a bit of time soaking in the sunshine - another marvel of His creation!

All Holy Men and Women, pray for us!

Till next week – enjoy your coffee and cake or ice cream!

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