

Reflections for 31st October 2021

All Saints and All Souls

Happy are the Sorrowful

What makes you happy? If we all shared the things that make us happy, I expect that we would find that some of our ideas would be different, and a lot would be similar. But I don't think any of us would come up with a list like the one that Jesus had.

In the time that Jesus lived, many religious teachers used a particular kind of saying, about the kinds of people who were 'happy', who were 'blessed' by God, and they would use those sayings to sum up the heart of their teaching, and set out what was distinctive about their view of the world. Jesus took up this style of teaching, and he did something new and surprising with it.

Jesus often takes our assumptions, and turns them upside-down. So, in Matthew chapter 5 we find his list of the kinds of people that he says are 'happy', who are blessed, and they are: the poor, those who grieve, the weak, those who long for justice, those who are ready to forgive, those who see the world clearly, those who work for peace, and those who are persecuted for doing what is right.

This is not what we would normally expect, but this can be good news for us when we are in any of those places, when that is how we feel. Because, as Jesus promised:

those who are persecuted will discover the kingdom of God

those who work for peace will know God as their Father

those who see the world clearly will see God

those who are ready to forgive will discover that they are forgiven

those who long for justice will be satisfied

those who are weak will discover the strength of God

those who grieve will find comfort

and those who are poor will discover the riches of the kingdom of God

Revd John Waller

Faithful Lord, whose steadfast love never ceases

and whose mercies never come to an end:

grant us the grace to trust your promises

and to receive your blessings,

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: (for All Saints) Isaiah 56. 3-8; Hebrews 12. 18-24; Matthew 5. 1-12

Story: 'In the Beginning' (based on the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2)

As we approach the COP26 Climate Conference, we are reminded of the call to care for God's good creation.