



All Saints Day Sunday, November 4th, 2018

Reclaiming Halloween



The celebration of All Saints Day in Sweden

This Sunday falls in the wake of All Saints Day, which falls on November 1st each year. Halloween, something best known as an astute marketing exercise, fall on the evening before All Saints Day and actually has a strong pre-Christian and Christian connections.

Halloween is really grounded historically in Celtic history. For the Celts, the dates October 31st and November 1st were restless times. As summer moved into darker and colder months, these two days were considered the time when veil between earthly reality and the spirits of the dead would thin-out. It was a frightening time, when Samhain – as it was called – the spirits of the dead would look for a body to possess. Christianity was reserved about this tradition, but because the Celts refused to give it up as their end of Summer Festival, as creepy as it was, it was incorporated and Christianised as All Saints Eve. Part and parcel of the Celtic tradition has then been this idea of the darkness of the dead, the threat that they represent, in a sort of Manichaeian world.

Latin Christianity has taken a totally different direction as regards All Saints Eve and Day. Rather than emphasize the threat of the dead, Latin Americans are more sanguine and visit their ancestors, emphasizing the continuity and love between those who still live and those who preceded them. It is a wonderful practice where death and the dead are not read fearfully or in a macabre way, but creatively, where gratitude and love cross existential and historical divides.

GATHERING

Announcements

Greeting

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
 The Lord be with you
and also with you

Hymn: Let all the nations (TiS 63, In dir ist freude, Gastoldi/JS Bach)

Introduction

A Community Prayer

In this opening prayer I invite you to consider someone who has helped give shape and meaning to your faith. It may be a family member, friend, school leader, minister, or historical figure. It could even be someone who may not formally subscribe to Christian faith, but who has grounded you in your ethical understandings, your appreciation of fairness and justice.

I shall invite you at the end of this collective prayer to say this person's name. will be invited to say this person's name aloud at the conclusion of this prayer.

O God, we come into this sacred space,
 mindful of the generations of faith who have come before us:
 adults and children, certain and questioning,
 men and women, hopeful and despairing.

We give thanks for the welcome all receive from you, Lord,
 and for the ways we continue to be enfolded into community.
 With grateful hearts, we mention now the names of those who have
 shaped our faith, encouraging us as saints in your realm...

*People may mention aloud the name of the one who has influenced
 their Christian identity*

Confession

In our worry and despair, for you O God, we wait...

We wait...

We wait...

We wait...

When tears threaten to overwhelm us, we wait...

We wait...

We wait...

We wait...

When we long for a fresh start and newness of heart, we wait...

We wait...

We wait...

We wait...

When we consider the state of our world, we wait...

We wait...

We wait...

We wait...

When we have done all that we can, for you,

O God, we wait...

Some Conflicting Observations about Saints

Virtue is something you have to get good at, like playing the trombone or tolerating bores at parties. Being a virtuous human being takes practice; and those who are brilliant at being human (what Christians call the saints) are the virtuosi of the moral sphere - the Pavarottis and Maradonas of virtue.

Terry Eagleton

God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners.

Soren Kierkegaard

To me, there are saints every day. They stand up and help others and live for others and do things for others.

Theodore Melfi

Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent.

George Orwell

To be mad is to feel with excruciating intensity the sadness and joy of a time. To maintain it is difficult. We either slacken and fall back, accepting the relief of a rational view and the approval of others, or we may push on, and, by falling, arise. When and if by our unforgivable stubbornness, we finally burst through to worlds upon worlds of motionless light, we are no longer called afflicted or insane. We are called saints."

Marilynne Robinson, Gilead

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

Ruth 1:1-18 (Good News Translation): Ruth a Saint before Saints

Jeanette Barrett

The book of Ruth could be classified as a 'short story'. While it is set a time long before even king David (hence the book is placed after the book of Judges) most scholars would date the writing of the story to a much later time, after Israel had been in exile in Babylon. It is at that time that questions of how foreigners could become worshippers of Israel's God arose. The first chapter of Ruth, moves back and forth between emptiness and fullness. It begins with famine and ends with food available again in Naomi's, the mother-in-law of Ruth, homeland (see v. 6). Naomi's life begins with fullness – a husband, two sons and two daughters-in-law – and ends in emptiness with only memories of her family and unable to provide for the one daughter-in-law who wants to tag along (cf. v. 21). In contrast to her name meaning 'pleasant', Naomi's experience has been bitter and later she suggests to the women of Bethlehem that she should be called Mara, 'bitterness' (v. 20). But, it is to this one that Ruth clings and to whom she will be faithful. While she is urged to return to her own people, land, customs and god, she chooses rather to stay with her widowed mother-in-law. We should not lose sight of the difficulty of such a choice. It would mean living among an unknown foreign people. She will enter a foreign land and encounter new customs. Most of all she will claim a strange god as her own, a god who, in her experience, has so far only dealt harshly with Naomi through famine and death. Ultimately Naomi's death will be that of Ruth too (v. 17), and death seems to be the only certain thing about this life Naomi and Ruth now endure.

1 ¹⁻² Long ago, in the days before Israel had a king, there was a famine in the land. So, a man named Elimelech, who belonged to the clan of Ephrath and who lived in Bethlehem in Judah, went with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion to live for a while in the country of Moab. While they were living there, ³ Elimelech died, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons, ⁴ who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About ten years later ⁵ Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left all alone, without husband or sons.

⁶ Sometime later, Naomi heard that the LORD had blessed his people by giving them good crops; so she got ready to leave Moab with her daughters-in-law. ⁷ They started out together to go back to Judah, but on the way ⁸ she said to them, “Go back home and stay with your mothers. May the LORD be as good to you as you have been to me and to those who have died. ⁹ And may the LORD make it possible for each of you to marry again and have a home.”

So, Naomi kissed them good-bye. But they started crying ¹⁰ and said to her, “No! We will go with you to your people.”

¹¹ “You must go back, my daughters,” Naomi answered. “Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry? ¹² Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons, ¹³ would you wait until they had grown up? Would this keep you from marrying someone else? No, my daughters, you know that's impossible. The LORD has turned against me, and I feel very sorry for you.”

¹⁴ Again they started crying. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye and went back home,^[b] but Ruth held on to her. ¹⁵ So Naomi said to her, “Ruth, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god.^[c] Go back home with her.”

¹⁶ But Ruth answered, “Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the LORD's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death^[d] separate me from you!”

¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Mark 12:28-34 (NRSV): Becoming a Saint: choosing a particular path.

Emily Jacobsson

When we scratch the surface of the text, we find cracks and notice that the story is built on a very particular structure. Why is loving God with all one's heart and mind and strength more important than sacrifices? Surely loving God means obeying God's commandments. So, if God commands sacrifices, loving God means offering

sacrifices. Has history not been full of men and women wanting to love the Lord their God in this way? Thoroughgoing and conscientious obedience to biblical commands from God is foundational according to this view. Our story assumes that such a logic of obedience is flawed. The point of this story is that blind obedience to all God's commandments set down in Scripture or the broader tradition, is impossible and unhelpful. The point is that to follow Jesus is to prioritize a particular ethos, a particular practice, at the expense of the other rules. In short, it is ethics that take priority over religious practice, over "sacrifice", ethics that take priority over worship and liturgy.

²⁸One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³²Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; ³³and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbour as oneself,' —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Some Thoughts: "Halloween, All Saints, Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos)

Offering

Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

Prayer of Dedication

EUCCHARIST

Hymn: Far beyond our mind's grasp (TiS 542, Caturrog Na Nonoy, Francisco Feliciano)

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us lift up our hearts.

..... ***We lift them to the Lord.***

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

.....***It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,
for your love is forever
and you have raised the crucified Christ from the dead.

You created all things and placed Christ as the cornerstone.
You made your grace known to Israel in the wilderness,
and through your prophets you pledged
your everlasting love and constant faithfulness.

You anointed your child, Jesus,
with the Holy Spirit and power,
and he went about doing good
and healing all who were oppressed by evil.
He was put to death, hung on a tree,
but you raised him on the third day,
and allowed him to appear, first to Mary Magdalene
and then to your other chosen witnesses.
So now we praise you within the gates of justice
and raise our glad songs of victory

for you have become our saviour
and hidden our lives in Christ in glory.

Therefore we join with all the company of heaven in their song

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth
are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.***

***Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest***

Through him, in him and because of him,
We affirm the Church's faith

***Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.***

Institution

Lord's Prayer

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

Breaking of the Bread

Christ is the bread of joy
Who shares food with sinners.

Christ is the cup of life,
Who revives the faint-hearted

Let us receive what we are;
Let us become what we receive.

Agnus Dei

Jesus, Wisdom of God,

have mercy on us

Jesus, Word made flesh,
have mercy on us

Jesus, Liberator of creation
grant us peace.

Communion

Distribution

We come forward as a family to partake of the elements together at the Communion Table. The cup on the right-hand side as you face the table is unfermented grape juice and the cup on the left-hand side is alcoholic wine.

Prayer after Communion

God of heaven and earth,
you make us one in Christ.

Inspire us with new vision of the sabbath
becoming a community marked by the freedom to serve.

Give us strength to walk together

In Christ's name

Amen

Prayers of the People

Jeremy Kim

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, ***work through your saints***, and the congregational response, ***and your sinners***

Closing Hymn: City of God (As One Voice 57, Dan Schutte)

**Awake from your slumber, arise from your sleep
A new day is dawning for all those who weep
The people in darkness have seen a great light
The Lord of our longing, has conquered the night**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing***

***For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

**We are sons of the morning, we are daughters of day
The one who has loved us, has brightened our way
The Lord of all kindness has called us to be
a light for all people to set their hearts free.**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing
For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

***God is light, in him there is no darkness
Let us walk in his light, his children one and all***

**O comfort my people, make gentle your words,
Proclaim to my city, the day of her birth**

***Let us build the city of God
May our tears be turned into dancing
For the Lord, our light and our love
Has turned the night into day***

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ is life!

Let us live
with perception and discernment,
without fear, with imagination and courage,
open as the saints are to new things

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Going Out: You shall go out with joy (TiS 755, Tress of the Field, Steffi Greiser Ruben)...we sing twice

Musical Postlude

Pianist:

Rosemary Osborne