All Saints' 11/2026
1 John 3:1-3

SEE WHAT KIND OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS GIVE TO US, THAT WE WHOULD BE CALLED CHILDEN OF GOD; AND SO WE ARE.

How do you dress a baby? I don't mean, step-by-step – you know, first the feet, then the arm, that type of thing. I mean more in the sense of in what do you dress a baby? On the day of his/her baptism, a nice white {gown / outfit}. In this most sacred week in North Dakota, some of you may be partial to clothe them in blaze orange. In light of the weather and this being November, some may opt for warmth.

I ask you that question because today we celebrate All Saints'. We remember those who rest from their labors in the mansions of heaven and wear the crown of life. And, WE ALSO REJOICE THAT WE ARE SAINTS. "SAINT" MEANS "HOLY ONE". WE ARE THE HOLY ONES OF GOD BECAUSE, AS HIS CHILDREN, HE HAS CLOTHED US IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF JESUS CHIRST. IN CHIRST, YOU ARE A SAINT OF GOD.

I. To help us understand whey God had to clothe us in the righteousness of Christ, we just need to listen to the words of our Gospel reading, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v. 3).* You hear that word "poor," and you instantly want to quote the Rodney Dangerfield line, "When I was a kid, we were so poor, I couldn't even pay attention". When Jesus is talking about "poor in spirit," He's not talking about silver or gold, how much money you have, or how much stuff you have, He's talking about the poverty of sin.

Last week, President Chepulis quoted Luther, "We are all beggars before God". We are beggars because we have nothing to offer God,

because by nature, we are dead in sin. We love to parade how great we are in the costume of our self-righteousness before our neighbors and the world. That self-righteousness causes to look at our neighbor and say, *"God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector" (Lk 18:11).*

Do you recall Adam and Eve in the Garden? They rebelled against God, they saw their nakedness and hid from God. God saw their nakedness and the Creator clothed them to cover over the shame of their sin. So it is My Friends that God sees us in the nakedness, the guilt, the shame of our sin. And, God knew that we could not make ourselves righteous by our own reason or strength.

II. The GOOD NEWS for us: Just as So God acted to clothe Adam and Eve, He acted to clothe us in righteousness.

Here's how He did it: He so loved us poor sinners that He sent His only-begotten Son Jesus into this world, born of Virgin Mother. In Jesus, there was no hardness of heart or rebellion; there was only innocence and purity. He, free from the evil effects of sin, was able to perfectly obey the Father's will. God's own Son paid the price for our transgression and rebellion with His innocent suffering and death on the cross of Calvary. The innocent Lamb of God shed His blood to cover over our sin.

III. So let me ask you again: In what do you clothe a baby? God clothed you with Christ. The Bible teaches us: *All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Ga 3:27, NIV).* Baptized into Christ, we wear His own holiness and purity as our very own. Cleansed by His blood, we stand before God, no longer wearing the filth and stain of our sin, but clothed with Christ. When God looks at you, He does not see your sin. He sees only the pure, holy, righteousness of Jesus Christ.

On All Saints', the white paraments decorate the church. White is the color of innocence. That's the color of sainthood, the "holy ones," those who have been cleansed from all of their sins in the blood of Jesus Christ. All Saints is another reminder of what God has done for us -- **and what He makes us** -- in Jesus Christ.

But, let us never forget the rest of the story of our life on this earth. The Bible does indeed teach us that we are the saints, the holy ones, of God. But at the same time, we are still a sinner. While we live on this earth, we are always and at the same time, a saint and a sinner.

As a saint and a sinner, we must ever listen to the words of Paul:

> *We were buried therefore with [Christ] by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Ro 6:4).*

Baptized into Christ, we have died to sin. As the holy ones of God, we have no desire, no will, for sin. And, we have been raised to a new life in Him. As He served God, we serve God. As we live now and forever in Christ, our one, single purpose is to do God's will in our lives.

All Saints gives us the opportunity to remember the work saints have done for Christ and His Church. No, we do not pray to the saints or ask them to forgive our sins. The saints are not mediators between God and us. The Bible teaches us that there is only one mediator between God and men -- Jesus Christ. It is to Him that we turn for forgiveness and grace to help us to fight the good fight of faith.

But, we do remember the lives and work of the saints. In the lives of the saints, we see the great things God can accomplish in human lives.

Are you burdened with guilt? Does the evil foe continually bring to your remembrance memories of past transgressions? Then take comfort

from the lives of the saints. When you see Peter forgiven after denying Christ and David forgiven after his adultery with Bathsheba, we know that God does indeed forgive. In seeing God forgive the failings of the saints, we rejoice that God's grace does indeed abound more than sin and we take comfort that as He has forgiven them, He will forgive us.

Are you in the midst of a severe trial? Is the valley of the shadow of death very dark and deep for you this day? Then, take courage and strength from the lives of the saints. Remember how God used the treachery and deceit of his brothers to work <u>good</u> in the life of Joseph. Remember how God gave David victory over the giant Goliath. Remember how God shut the mouths of the lions to keep Daniel from harm.

Are you in a time of indecision in your life? Then remember St. Jonah. In His own way, God may be telling you to go to your Nineveh. God may have need of you as He did Paul. No, God will not have a whale swallow you or appear to you on the road to Damascus, but trust in His good and gracious will for your life. God will get you where He wants you, where you can best serve Him.

In Galatians, Paul writes:

> "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Ga 2:20).

Saints lived out their faith in their thoughts, words, and deeds. The best way that we can remember and honor the saints is to imitate their faith in Jesus Christ and daily live out that faith.

As they walked by faith through this valley of the shadow of death, we can do the same. As they fought the good fight of the faith and took hold of eternal life, we see that we can do the same. As they were faithful unto

death and received the crown of life, we follow in their footsteps so that we too will one day wear the crown of life.

When we see Aaron holding up the prophet's hand, when we see Eunice raising her son Timothy up in the Christian faith, when we see Tychicus faithful in helping Paul, we know that we too can serve God where He has put us.

On this All Saints', rejoice in the goodness of your Father. He has clothed you with Christ in your baptism and that means you are a saint.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.