

Coffee to Go | All Saints Day

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

saints, blessed, Halloween, God, ancestors, Jesus, Beatitudes, honor

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith. And we are so happy you're with us on the journey. So today we're going to talk about All Saints Day, that is November 1, it's one of those Holy Days that actually has a date that it falls on every year. And it's a day where we remember the saints. And I put a "/" disciple. So let's say we remember the saints/disciples who have come before us and had a positive effect on us, or they meant a great deal to us. But they're now they've passed away and gone into God's eternal reign, often on All Saints days, you will be in a congregation or a group or in a family where they read the names of everyone in that congregation or group or family that has passed on door during the year. And then they tell stories about that person, which is always a really lovely way to celebrate All Saints. But there's more to it than that. Blake. Let's talk about the day before All Saints Day,

Blake Smith 01:40

The Day of the Dead. And what is the Day of the Dead?

Karin Peter 01:45

Yes. So the day before All Saints. It's connected to All Saints in the sense that in some traditions in, in the United States and our traditions, a lot of our Halloween traditions come out of England, and the UK and even some from Europe. But that's Halloween. And that's the 31st of October, which is a you know, it starts in the grocery store with the pumpkins that come out in August, I think. But Halloween was the hallowed Eve, or the holy evening before the feast day, which is All Saints Day. And that's kind of the tradition where Halloween is, but there's all kinds of kinds of wonderful pagan things that Christianity borrowed along the way, and Halloween has a few of those as well. And that's where we get ghosts and ghoulies and some of those fun things that happen. But truly, it's the evening that the spirits are kind of unsettled as they prepare for All Saints Day. And the Day of the Dead comes out of Mexico, Latin America. And that's the tradition of honoring one's ancestors that have passed on which is completely connected to this whole idea of Hallowed Eve. And All Saints that we give honor. And remember that people participated and passed on. And it seems like most cultures and most world faiths have something in them. At some point in in the cycle of the of the journey of faith where this takes place where there's honoring of this, I know that in Daoist Temples that I used to visit in San Francisco, you could go in and purchase papers to burn as an offering to those that have gone before. And when you go into a cemetery where there are people of Jewish descent who have been interred

there, you will often see small stones on the memorial headstone. Because when you go to visit your loved one who's passed on, you put a stone, small pebble, on the headstone to show that you were there to like honor or remember. And in Christianity, we have Jesus saying at the Last Supper, of course, remember me when you do these things when you eat and drink and gather. Remember me so Halloween Day of the Dead, I'll say it's all connected. Oh, a way to remember.

Blake Smith 04:28

And a great way to connect because well, we hear All Saints Day and we'll talk a little bit about this and what is a saint? And so being able to look back and honor those who have gone before us is really important. So but we also then look at Halloween and of course in some particular Christian traditions it's looked down upon because of its pagan beginnings and or perceived that way. And yeah, there's a there's just an incredible value, as you'd mentioned that there are so many cultures who truly value their ancestors, those who have gone before. We talk about in Christianity, the cloud of witnesses that have gone before. And so to take this time and honor that and see the positive in it, I think is really good for us.

Karin Peter 05:22

Absolutely. So it's one of my favorite days in the Christian calendar, is All Saints Day, for that very reason. That is the idea that we build on what has come before and in Community of Christ particularly because we do remember those people who have gone before and we spend time here on Project Zion talking about people who have gone before. So yes, all good things here to remember for All Saints. So in case I forget to say it at the end or late in case you forget to say it when you sign off, This is a this is a happy All Saints Day as opposed to a happy Halloween. So we're in All Saints Day as far as the Christian calendar, which gives us kind of a warning that the end of the Christian cycle is coming and we're soon to begin again in Advent. We have just a few Sundays before that happens. And so in our journey with Jesus, we have to look at where is Jesus this week, knowing that when the liturgical calendar and lectionary was put together, people it was intentional, that things start to really build at this time scripturally as we get towards the end of the calendar year. So Jesus this week is on the side of a mountain because we're in Matthew, the same passage if we were in Luke, up out in a level field, but Right, we're in Matthew, so he's on the side of a mountain, and he's teaching what it is to be a person of God, disciple, a saint. So let's listen in.

Blake Smith 07:04

All right, well, our Scripture today comes from the Gospel of Matthew, as you said, it's the fifth chapter, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, and it is the first through the 12th verse. Now, when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them. He said, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets, who were

before you." This is quite a list. And I realized even as I read this, when we take it, phrase by phrase, Blessed are the poor in Spirit. I mean, this is not a future thing. This is not this is you will be blessed if you do this. This is people living in those circumstances, living out those ways, which are God's ways, and they are blessed because of it. Doesn't mean it's going to be easy. I mean, we hear persecution, the need for mercy, the need for comfort those who are mourning, but it is a word of blessing to those who are suffering, to victims, to those who are oppressed.

Karin Peter 09:17

So Blake, you said something that I want to know if you'll talk a little bit more before, before we go any further, you said it doesn't mean it will be easy. So when we hear "oh, God just blessed me today," we use that as if the last mean something good happened. But what you're saying is that's not always the case have to be blessed doesn't mean God threw you a bunch of money or God, you know, made your sickness go away, or whatever the way we take it currently.

Blake Smith 09:49

Right, right. So for me, the way I understand this is blessing comes in the knowledge that we are walking in the way of God, and that God's preferred future will come about at some point. That involves faith and hope and expectation. It's not about immediate gratification and response. But the blessing of knowing that you are in relationship with God and walking in God's ways.

Karin Peter 10:19

Okay. Thank you.

Blake Smith 10:21

Yeah, yeah. So it brings up some interesting things, especially today, as we're talking about All Saints Day. And we think back again, about those who have gone before us who have walked in these roles. Sometimes we think of saints as those who have been high and lifted up, and they've done X number of things, and they're holy and righteous and all that. And this is, again, real people engaged in real life, struggling, mourning, being persecuted, etc, but doing their best to walk in God's ways. And so it's not about necessarily being holy and devout to be a saint. But living these ways these Beatitudes, that's what leads to sainthood, right? So and it's not about being perfect, but about being eager to know what is right, and to do what is right. It comes with, it comes with a deep caring for all of the world, and how things affect I mean, one might go as deep as saying, even what I eat for dinner tonight, how does that affect the world? How did it get here how you know, and so we don't often think, as deeply like that. But sainthood includes that deep care and concern for others, to be caring and to forgive, from a place of pure motive, not for what it will bring for me, or what is my right to have, but how my actions and the actions of those I influence and engage with, affect the world? So some questions that come out of that out of that, for me, would be to think about who has influenced you in your life and your spiritual journey? Who's been a positive influence who has exhibited those deep, pure caring moments? Not out of again, what will it get for me, but out of a deep concern, who, whose life has influenced you in your spiritual journey in those ways? And what saints in this larger term of saints not the ones that have been canonized, but the ones that we would remember? Who have who have touched our lives? Which ones have you tried to emulate? And why even saying, what was it about them that said, this is what I want to model my life after? And then I think we need to think about because all of these ways of God

are about humility and integrity and hopefulness. We need to think about how are we walking in those ways in our life today and this week?

Karin Peter 13:37

it's really helpful Blake, I think, to hear the beatitudes in that way of this is really a way to live. A saintly way to live a saint in the sense of discipleship, but I kind of like the same, you know, piece of it. And the idea that somehow when we begin to think and live in this way that the Beatitudes lay out for us that we to become saintly in the sense that we are becoming more deeply committed to discipleship.

Blake Smith 14:11

And there'll be somebody who will look back perhaps someday and think about the ways we lead our lives, and perhaps influence them in ways we may or may not have known.

Karin Peter 14:24

Responsibility as well as blessing is an interesting way to look at sainthood. So I was thinking about how we can experience kind of this, not just the Scripture, but where we are today and All Saints Day. And one of the things I was thinking is that we could make a list of either family members or people who we would identify as like personal saints, whether from our own movement in Community of Christ or on our own walk, but identify one thing in each of their lives that you or another family member is trying to be like, or that influences you. For example, if I have a family sitting around the table, I would go around and I would name one thing about each person around the table that I think is really worth emulating, is really worth adopting into my own life. Or if it's a group of friends, you could do the same thing or in a congregation, you could break into groups and do the same thing. And, and you could talk about why you want to adopt that, why you want to be like that, or why that influences you. So if you're interested in experiencing All Saints, give that a shot.

Blake Smith 15:40

Yeah. And I also came to mind as I was thinking about this, I remember hearing a pastor talking about you mentioned earlier Karin about coming to worship and telling the stories. And I remember hearing pastor talk about the way their congregation celebrated, All Saints say, and that each person brings an item that reminds them of maybe it's a personal item from that person they emulate, or something that reminds them of that person. And they create an altar, that they put those items on the altar for the worship, and that becomes their worship center. And I was thinking, you know, that's certainly something that a congregation could do, but even individually or as a family to bring an item to the table. And to help to share that story. I'm a very visual person. So you know, seeing that image, or that item is really helpful for me as well, so

Karin Peter 16:38

Well, and I'm a person who really likes my snacks. So wouldn't it be fun to bring like, everybody bring a recipe from someone from your family heritage so you know, bring your grandma's cookie recipe or, or some and have a potluck? Have an All Saints potluck meal.

Blake Smith 16:59

Chances are most of us have some recipe from some favorite recipe. Although my grandma would she would put together a recipe she'd say, Well, no, I put a pinch of this and a little bit of that.

Karin Peter 17:10

Nobody's gonna know you're just bringing the dish. Bring, your just bringing the food but yeah, there's lots of ways to do that kind of remembering, honoring aspect of All Saints. So do we have a blessing for All Saints Day?

Blake Smith 17:23

Indeed we do. And today it comes from a blessing by Arianne Brathwaite Lehn. We think of parents, grandparents, partners, wives, husbands, sisters, brothers, teachers, colleagues, neighbors, friends. Some of them did seem pretty unlikely characters to be our saints. But the more we live, the more we realize, that's pretty special to you and your choosing. We are grateful for these quirky, lovely individuals who have gone before us, but whose lights still shine, bringing warmth and illumination to our journey. Amen. So thanks for joining us this week here at Coffee to Go. We invite you to join us again next week for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.