BRECON AND EPYNT MINISTRY AREA

BEACONS GROUP NOTICESHEET AND SERVICE
Revd Jane de Gay tel: 01874 618485 e-mail: JanedeGay@cinw.org.uk
Revd Liz Bramley tel: 01874 665267 e-mail: LizBramley@cinw.org.uk
Ministry Area Leader: Revd Dr Gill Todd tel: 01874 610902
e-mail: GillianTodd@cinw.org.uk
Ministry Area Administrator: Tracy James mob: 07399 338724
e-mail: TracyJames@cinw.org.uk
Ministry Area website: **www.breconandepyntma.org.uk**

Sunday 1st November – All Saints Day

9.30am Holy Communion, Llanfrynach

Monday 2nd November – All Souls Day

6.00pm All Souls service, Llanhamlach

Sunday 8th November – Remembrance Sunday

9.30am Holy Communion, Llanfeugan, with Act of Remembrance at Cross Oak
10.00am Remembrance Service, Llanhamlach

ALL SOULS' SERVICE, Monday 2nd November , 6.00pm in Llanhamlach
This is a quiet service where we remember those who have died, recently or a long time ago, light a candle in their memory and read out their names.
Please let Jane or Liz have any names you would like remembered, and we will make sure they are on the list. You are very welcome to come to the service if you can.

LLANHAMLACH HYMN FESTIVAL: Sunday 22nd November, 3.00pm , with a difference this year - the Pontsenni Choir will be joining us to help us sing some of our favourite hymns. So what we need NOW are your favourite hymn choices so we can start the detailed planning. Please let Liz know your choice as soon as possible.

SERVICES ON RADIO AND TELEVISION THIS WEEK
Sunday Radio Wales, 7.33am - Celebration: Clyde Briggs prays for the Persecuted Church
Sunday Radio 4, 8.10am - Sunday Worship: 'Grief and Justice', West Croydon Baptist Church
Sunday BBC 1, 1.15pm - Songs of Praise: Pam Rhodes celebrates the life of St Francis
Sunday Radio 3, 6.00pm - Choral Evensong from St James' Piccadilly
Wednesday Radio3, 3.00pm - Choral Evensong from the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick
Monday - Friday at 9.45am, Radio 4 Extra - celebrating All Saints and All Souls

A SERVICE TO USE AT HOME for 1st NOVEMBER - All Saints Day

INTRODUCTION

Lord, you forgive all who truly repent.
A time of silence to reflect on sins and shortcomings, then:

Lord Jesus, you are our Saviour crucified and alive, our patient companion and guide:
Lord have mercy.

In the weakness of our faith, the shallowness of our hope, and our lack of love:
Christ have mercy.
For our lack of trust in your love:
Lord have mercy.

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect
Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living that we may come to those inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Revelation 7.9-17 The Multitude from Every Nation

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason, they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

Matthew 5.1-12 The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'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 receive 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 for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. *12* Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

REFLECTION

How would you describe a saint? Good? Famous? Dead? Not necessarily! Our Gospel reading helps ius see they are also ordinary people who try to walk closely with God and love their neighbours wherever they are.

There are two important points to make about being blessed or saintly:
First, what we have here in the Beatitudes is definitely NOT a list of qualifications, of what you have to do, or to have done, to be a saint! It's not really even a list of aspirations, rather hopeless ones, which show us how impossible it would be for us to live up to them on our own - this is true of course, but not exactly the focus here.
Second, look at the way they are written out, each with two parts. The second part is NOT a result or reward from the first. It's not a case of 'If this, then that.' Or 'If you behave well by doing certain 'good' things, then you'll get your reward, your brownie points, your peace of mind, go to heaven later on' - with the suspicion of the underlying opposite, if you can't manage to be good, then tough, you won't get there!

Because the word for ‘blessed’ here is not the same word as in the blessing we use at the end of a service, so you can go away feeling God’s love. It's a word which means "a state of happiness or good fortune that already exists" more like the kind of "wish you were here" holiday postcard where you might say "we have been very blessed with the weather." It has a lot to do with recognising where your blessings actually are, here and now, even in the middle of all the awful things that are going on around us.

Let's look at the first three Beatitudes as examples of this. Blessed are the poor - in spirit. What is that about? It means more than just practical poverty here. After all, that can make people desperate - desperate enough to steal or kill, or to cross the channel in flimsy boats. The point is rather that the poor are not rich or influential. They have no power of their own. And the poor in spirit know this and that they depend completely on God. They are not the arrogant people who have all the right answers, who have no need to listen to anyone else, or God, even.

This is closely linked to the third: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth Jesus says the people who have the right to inherit the ‘promised land’ are NOT the arrogant and powerful, like the Romans were then, nor like the ones now with the most powerful bombs or the biggest network of security police. The mere meek!

And what about Blessed are those that mourn? How can mourning ever be blessed? Losing loved ones is just so painful, as is losing a job or a pet, or having your house flooded and losing all your treasured possessions. What seems to be at work here is the really difficult idea that 'suffering is an extraordinary teacher' When you have lost the people or things you depend on, you might begin, in time, to see new things - including the kindness of friends and strangers. When you can see these blessings, you are blessed indeed. This is not only about personal mourning. Compassion for others' hardships is also a kind of mourning, which makes us better able to offer help. And being sadly aware of our own shortcomings can make us aware of forgiveness in a way which helps us forgive and

understand others far better. In that way not only are we blessed, but we can become a source of blessing to others.

This almost turns the Beatitudes on their heads: when you feel God's comfort most deeply it's probably because you are mourning something. When you are most aware of having a glimpse inside God's kingdom, it's because you are not trying to prove anything to him or anyone else, but have a right relationship with Him. When you have the attitudes Jesus describes, even if it's only sometimes, you'll find it's because you really are blessed with these blessings, if you can only stop to see them.

So, are the saints super heroes? Jesus describes people who have very little, and certainly little power or influence, people in trouble, people who mourn. But they are people blessed by God. So who are they? Well, don't they look very much like us?

Liz Bramley

PRAYERS & CONCLUSION

Let us pray.

O God, you sent your Son to bring the good news of your kingdom to all your people. Help us to listen to your voice with care, and with joy, even when our own news is bad and your news may not be what we are expecting to hear.

Show us how we might share with the poor, wherever we meet them, and learn from their particular blessings. Give us compassion for the exploited, the vulnerable and the persecuted, those who do not see a just division of wealth even in our own country. Let us not be satisfied too easily in our hunger and thirst for righteousness
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Show us how we might bring your comfort to those who are ill or mourning, and listen to their voices. We pray for someone we know by name… Help us to share your joy sensitively.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Show us how to stay alongside the meek, even when we are tempted to be impatient or dismissive. We pray for those with influence on the world stage, in politics, business or the media, that they might use their power for good. We are aware of national and world events and we bring to you an item from the recent news that we wish to pray for...
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Our Father, who art in Heaven.....

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you; so lead us by your Spirit that in this life we may live to your glory
and in the life to come enjoy you for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen**.

St Augustine of Hippo

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.