

All Saints Day

Sunday, November 1, 2009

10:00, 12:00Noon

1. How many of you got dressed up for Halloween yesterday?
 - what costume or mask did you wear?
 - I ended up with this mask - hard to find a mask that wasn't a scary
 - they were either horrific looking or they were politicians - both pretty scary!

Halloween is a time to pretend, to be tricked and treated

- it is a time to wear masks

Wearing masks can be fun

- we have a great time at Halloween pretending we are someone else
- with our true self hidden by a mask it is fun to look out and watch people's reaction

But when Halloween is over

- there comes a time when the mask has to come off (*TAKE MASK OFF*)
- We can't go on forever pretending that we are someone we're not

2. The Greek word for an actor who wore a mask is "HYPOCRITE"
 - Jesus had strong words to say about people who wore masks
 - 17 different times in the Gospels, Jesus calls people HYPOCRITES
 - MASK WEARERS

Jesus wanted people to be the same - **INSIDE AND OUT!**

- he preferred a sinful saint to a saintly looking sinner
- he judged people not on their external practice, for that too can be a mask,
but to how deeply they loved

3. All of us wear masks from time to time - sometimes we smile even when we're sad, other times we try to cover or hide what we really feel inside

Some wear the mask of "the BULLDOZER"

- they plow over everyone and everything
- they're so convinced that their way is the **ONLY** way that they close their minds and hearts off to other opinions or ways of looking at things
- as I've always said, "the louder the bark, the weaker the man."

Some wear the mask of "JOE COOL"

- we appear to be invulnerable at school
- we don't speak up when we see the wrong because we think we'll be unpopular
- we only hang around with the kids other kids like and avoid the ones who don't get attention

Some wear the mask of "the PERFECTIONIST"

- everything has to be clear, perfect, black and white
- anything less than that is disconcerting, upsetting

Some wear the mask of the "MOTHER HEN OR FATHER HEN"

- they're constantly fussing; picking up around you; trying to do things for you that you should be doing yourself."

3. The Christian life could be described in one line: as an effort to TAKE OFF ALL MASKS – TO BE OUR TRUE SELF

- St. Frances de Sales described it this way: 'BE NOTHING EXCEPT WHO YOU ARE . . . AND BE THAT PERFECTLY.'

- Author Matthew Kelly describes it as becoming the "BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES."

- and Pope John XXIII in his autobiography, "Journal of a Soul" described it as "becoming holy in a different way."

- we don't slavishly imitate someone else's holiness

- we take their virtue, their inspiration and become holy in our own way; in the way that God created us uniquely to be

4. Today's Scriptures encourages us in that journey

- Revelation - written for a people who were persecuted, killed for their faith

- it was written with symbolic language so that the people who needed to hear "Good News" would find it and those who sought to persecute faith would miss its meaning.

- The number 144,000 doesn't represent a static number but an infinite number

- Two perfect numbers $12 \times 12 \times 1,000$ a number which represented infinity

- the number of those who will be saved is great; an infinite number

5. The Scriptures tell us today in the first letter of John: *See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God! Yet in fact, that is what we are!*

- When we take off our masks, we discover ourselves as children of God

- beneath all the masks that we wear is our truest self

6. And the Gospel Beatitudes are the blueprint for our Christian life

- a reminder that no matter what we endure or suffer in this life

- the kingdom of God will be ours

7. Saints are people who took off their masks, and became the persons God created them to be

- When we celebrate All Saints day, we celebrate the ordinary lives of

men and women who heard that message "We are God's children" and lost the need to cover that true identity with a false one.

8. It is so easy to see the holiness and lives of the saints as unattainable

- but the fact is that saints are simple people - mothers, fathers, nurses, beggars, people from every walk of life who did what many of us are doing

Taking off their masks, and living as God's children

- holiness and sainthood can be seen all around us

- found in Carol who takes care of her husband and four boys, two with special needs

- in Joy - whose passion is for helping those in need and helping our parish reach out to others

- in Patrick whose generosity enables others to do so much good

- in Kim whose energy and enthusiasm for faith exudes from her

9. One day after Halloween, today we celebrate our future holy day: All Saints
- after a lifetime of struggle with our flaws and imperfections, we will stand naked and unmasked before our God

Let us resolve on this feast of All Saints Day to go through life simply being ourselves - as God created us to be, not playing a role, or attempting to be someone or something we are not

It is fun to wear masks. But there comes a time when the masks must come off.

For we are God's children now, Scripture tells us.

Let us not fear then, to take off our masks and show that we really are children of God.