

*Archbishop Anne's Letter to Algoma: November 2019*

*Archbishop's Motto for 2020*

*"In the same way, 'Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.'"*

*(Matthew 5.16)*



*"All Saints" by Elizabeth Wang*

*This painting entitled "All Saints" is by Elizabeth Wang. In it you can see all the saints standing like upright standing lit candles, standing in communion around the central figure of Christ. There is a figure kneeling in the middle – this is you, this is me.*

*We are here in the midst of Christ and His Saints.*

*“Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Bas. Pg. 160)*

We first come across these words when Jesus speaks to the crowds about the kingdom of God and how people of the kingdom should be living. Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* has plenty to say about all of that, but he begins with a description of people who God has an eye on – the poor in spirit, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, the merciful, the meek and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

A glimpse at our world today tells a completely different story about who the blessed really are, and none of those comes to my mind.

We live by a different set of beatitudes:

Blessed are the wealthy, for they will be able to own anything they desire.

Blessed are the well connected and those looking for power, for they will be able to climb up the ladder of success.

Blessed are those who look out for themselves, for we all know that 'I' must come first.

Blessed are the physically able, for their place on any team is guaranteed.

Jesus then moves on to naming his followers as being salt and light – two precious commodities in Jesus time, gifts of creation, which sustain life and make a world of difference. To be salt and light is to be tasty and lit up, flavourful and bright!

These words have a direct connection to the beatitudes. We don't just sit back and receive the abundant life that God promises or simply tell others about it. Jesus is talking about living in a way that makes a difference for others in the world calling out injustice and shining with the good news of Jesus, welcoming the spiritually lost from the darkness of their wanderings to the home of God's own heart.

We find these words again in the Baptismal service after the newly baptized, named as Christ's beloved child forever is given a candle shining with a tiny light on top of it: “Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (BAS pg. 160)

That light filled moment in the baptismal liturgy often goes by unnoticed as family members breathe a sigh of relief that the infant made it through the soaking without a howl. The candle is quickly snuffed out, handed off and tucked away in a box, its greater meaning forgotten.

The truth is that this is no ordinary moment and this light no ordinary light. It is a magnificent moment as a believer claims his or her rightful place with the saints on earth

and the saints in heaven. This is the new light of Christ's resurrected life passed on through the generations to all new believers.

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." Light is a blessing and being a bearer of Christ's light a responsibility. It is not meant to be tucked away or hidden under a bushel, covered up and ineffective. We must unmask all bushels disarming their power because the light we have is none other than the light that shines in the darkness which the darkness is never able to overcome.

This broken world of ours needs our light however insignificant it may seem to do our part in making the kingdom of heaven come to pass on earth here and now. This little light of ours is all Christ has.

I think a lot about light these days and the difference that the tiny light of a candle can make when it is dark outside. I light one every morning when I say my prayers and marvel at how the whole room changes in its soft glow. I know the power of this light to bind up the broken hearted and heal wounded souls. I see its brightness in a room where all are working together to bring glory to God.

As we walk together into 2020 let us live as light bearers who embody Christ and bring into being the new reality that Jesus speaks of from the mountain.

Bless you, saints of God!

*+Anne*