

READINGS FOR ALL SAINTS DAY:

FIRST READING: IS 63:16—64:8 16 But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. 17 Why, O LORD, do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance. 18 For a little while your people possessed your holy place, but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary. 19 We are yours from of old; but you have not ruled over them, they have not been called by your name. 8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. (NIV)

PSALM 80: 1-7 (Page 705 of the APB)

SECOND READING: 1 COR 1:3-9 3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way; in all your speaking and in all your knowledge; 6 Because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. 7 Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful. (NIV)

GOSPEL: MK 13:32-37 32 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task,

and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back; whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" (NIV)

PRAYERS: Denise Morton, Paddy Sander, Mike & Lindi, Marlene Palm, Deborah Lewis, Lynda Main, Keith Johnson, Lynn Edward, Charlie Kekana, Alexandra & Olivia Kessell, Kristin Pepper, Shirley Vermeulen, Casey Bennett, Chandy, Merle Wilson.

YEARS MIND: Donald Ross McKenzie

R.I.P. Jane Horley. Please pray for Rupert, Nadia and their family at this sad time.

ADVENT ONE—THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE PATRIARCHS

Reader: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light: on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest. (IS 9:2-3)

All: on this first advent Sunday we light a candle for the people who have carried God's light throughout the ages—people who have followed God's leading from familiar places into the unknown; people whom the Lord has brought out of the darkness of slavery into the light of freedom; people who have waited patiently and expectantly for the coming of the Kingdom. We pray that we may be glad bearers of God's light to the world. Amen

(As many people missed the service last Sunday because of the 94.7 Cycle Race we are repeating the insert from last week.)

Dear Friends in Christ

A harried and hurried life.

Bishop Brian in his excellent and challenging Ad Clerum speaks about the "demands" that the church makes upon its members. We often use the word "demand" ourselves – the demands of our work, family demands, and other "demands" on our time and energy and attention. My dictionary says of "demand": "an insistent and peremptory request, made as if by right; a pressing requirement as in he has got enough demands on his time already." What stands out here are the words insistent and pressing.

Bishop Brian asks the question: is the church unreasonable in its demands (insistent and pressing requirements). (Is the church "demanding"? I like to think that the church is immolating its Master by "inviting" you to share in the responsibilities of communal life. God never seems to insist, but beckons us to a closer relationship, a union with God).

Whatever variation of the question may be, there is no doubt that there is, as + Brian states " a malaise in the church – diminished giving, falling attendances and growing marginalization". Who's to blame: the hierarchy or the people? Paradoxically, they both make up the commune of the church, so to apportion blame is impossible. And for this very reason it is incumbent on us all to give our hearts and minds to these questions.

None of this is worth one iota without prayer. We might think that we have the right question with the most favorable outcome. However, Maggie Ross says that if we "want to truly intercede we have to let go our ideas *not only of what the outcome ought to be but what the problem is in the first place*. This means that we come in silence and let go into the love of God these questions and wait upon God as attentive listeners. Into this space, lovingly tendered, we allow Wisdom to nurture us into a co-creative energy of love.

The light of God shines so nicely in the darkness of our problems. Have no doubt that we are being led into the "more" of God. We have a surprising God.

