**All Saints Day**
**November 1, 2026 • 10:30am**
**Trinity Episcopal Church • New Orleans, LA**

**The Rev. Lex Breckinridge**

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

May you live in interesting times, goes the old Chinese curse, and the times we're living in right now are about as interesting as they get, if by interesting we mean anxious and uncertain. In this interesting year, the rancor, the bitterness, the polarization that is plaguing our culture grows by the day.

And there's a sense that it may only get worse following Tuesday's election. We're dividing ourselves into warring tribes, and these tribes often don't speak to each other so much as they curse each other. This kind of tribalism and us versus them, good guys versus bad guys, I'm right and you're wrong, that way of being in the world is really the curse of these interesting times.

If you find yourself wondering, come Wednesday, how then shall we live? You're going to be in pretty good company. So in these anxious days, it's a beautiful bit of synchronicity that this Sunday before yet another divisive and rancorous election, we celebrate All Saints Day. It's the day on the church calendar where we're called to celebrate what unites us and get over all that divides us.

We're reminded of what scripture calls the mighty cloud of witnesses, the communion of saints, those whose faith is known to us and those whose faith is known to God alone. We remember those who have preceded us in life and in death and who are now rejoicing in another country, a heavenly country, at home in the heart of God.

Do you know that by virtue of our baptisms, the baptisms that these beautiful young people are going to experience in just a moment, and one who's getting

ready right now for that baptism, do you know that all of us by virtue of our baptisms are citizens of two countries? We're citizens of this great republic and we're also citizens of another country, a heavenly country.

Speaking of our ancestors in faith like Abraham and Moses, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews had this to say, all of those all of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they'd been thinking of the land that they left behind, they would have had an opportunity to return, but as it is they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, indeed God has prepared a city for them. That's right, as Christians we are citizens of another country, and what does life in that country look like? Well, it looks a lot like the Beatitudes just read, we just read, which begin Jesus's sermon on the mount. We hear Jesus describing life in a state of blessedness, a state of inner and outer peace, and this state of blessedness isn't reserved for some far-off place called heaven.

No, it's a place and a state that's available to us in this very moment. So let's focus on two of these states of blessedness that are particularly relevant to how we choose to live in this present moment. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. And to dig a little deeper into what they might mean for us, let's hear from Eugenes Peterson, the message. It's a translation of the Bible into contemporary language, and Peterson puts it like this, you're blessed when you're at the end of your rope.

With less of you there is more of God and God's rule. And the second one goes like this, you're blessed when you're content with just who you are. No more, no less.

That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought. I've been at the end of my rope, feeling lost, feeling abandoned, out of options. I've been there, maybe you have too.

It's a tough place to be, yet like a lot of tough places in life, there's opportunity there as well. Just talk to anyone who's walking the 12 steps, hitting rock bottom it's called, recognizing that you don't have control, recognizing that you don't have the power to fix your situation. It leaves you vulnerable.

Your egoic delusions are stripped away, and that leaves space for the Holy Spirit to get to work. That's what poverty of spirit means, being poor in spirit, and it's what that wonderful translation, when there is less of you there is more of God, means. You know, it's back to Adam and Eve, when they disobeyed God and listened to the wily serpent's tempting advice to eat from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because as the serpent said, then you will be like God.

They were pushing God out of the judgment seat and taking God's place there. Their own egoic desires trumped God's hope for their lives. They were eating fruit from the tree of self-importance, never a good idea, yet we do it all the time, and that leads us to blessed are the meek.

You know, meek doesn't mean timid or weak, for Jesus meek is the opposite of weakness. Meekness means humility, which means having the inner courage to let go of the need to create a false persona for yourself, to let go of the need to be defensive, to let go of the need to present a bright shiny face to the world to cover up your insecurities, to let go of the need to protect your all too fragile ego. Oh, that's just exhausting, isn't it? You're blessed when you're content.

You're blessed when you're at peace with just who you are. No need to pretend, no need to be defensive, no need for your false self. Being at peace with who you are brings the peace that passes all understanding.

These states of blessedness remind me of Saint Augustine's observation that we each have a God-sized hole in our hearts, that we spend most of our lives trying to

fill with something other than God, like our various addictions, whether it's alcohol or drugs or sex or shopping or accumulation of wealth or the primal addictions to power and control, safety and security, affection and esteem. When the chase for these addictions fills our hearts, we don't have any room for our deepest desire. And what is that? My dear friends, your deepest desire is to be deeply connected to the source of life.

Your deepest desire is to be connected with the source of goodness, to be connected with the source of truth, to be connected to the source of beauty. It's in these connections that we find our true home, that better country that the writer to the Hebrews describes, our heavenly home. A home, you know, which isn't far off.

It's right here. That heavenly home is waiting for you. Would you like to get to that better country, that better home, especially in a time like today when you look around and things don't seem so heavenly, do they? Well, you know what? Get out of your head.

Get out of your head and get down into your heart. Look for beauty. Touch grass.

Take a walk. You know, St. Thomas Aquinas said that nature, nature is God's first Bible. That's one place to locate the divine.

Later in the Sermon on the Mount, we're going to hear Jesus say this, and I want you to please pay very careful attention to what Jesus is saying here. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air.

They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to your span of life? I'm going to say that again. Which one of you, by worrying, can add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field which is alive today and tomorrow's thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry saying, what will we eat or what will we drink or what will we wear? For it is the Gentiles who seek all these things, and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

What am I going to eat? What am I going to wear? What am I going to drink? Beauty can't answer any of these questions for us, but it can make them for just a little while seem small in the presence of something so lovely, so unexpectedly delightful that it just fills us with joy. A mama cardinal resting on a branch of a 200-year-old live oak tree, a bed of impatience and a riot of color, the aroma of jasmine coming to you on a gentle breeze, and as that breeze kisses your cheek, you know for just an instant the breeze of the spirit blowing where she will. I wonder why Jesus's teachings about birds and lilies aren't as sticky as other things he said.

You know, it's almost as if it's just too good to be true. But if we're going to trust in lots of other things the master said, why not trust in this too? If we can do what he says even for a moment, if we can just slow down, just slow down long enough to sink into the beauty that's all around us, we might begin to hear something like music, a song in the wind, a divine song that sends us on our way to make more beauty in the world.

We just need to stop worrying long enough to give it a try.