

All Saints Day – November 1, 2015
Text: Revelation 7:9-17
Theme: "I'm Not Dead Yet!"

Is anyone a fan of Monty Python? I love "The Holy Grail."

There's a scene from the black plague and the guy who was the collector of all the dead bodies is coming through the streets with a cart shouting, "Bring out your dead!" A guy comes up to the cart with a presumably dead man slung over his shoulder and as he tries to put him on the cart, the dead guy yells, "I'm not dead yet!" I often think of that scene at funerals. Don't act so surprised. You knew I was twisted a long time ago.

We have such very somber ceremonies for burying the dead. Now there are surely things about which to be sad. It is sad that we sinned and so have to even go through death. God never meant for death to be in the world. We brought that in. The wages of sin is death. It is sad that because of death, we have to be separated for a time from people we love. Turns out, we all have to maintain a long-distance relationship at some point. But it is not sad for the person of faith who dies! Only their bodies are dead, *THEY* are not dead at all. In fact, *THEY* have never been more alive. For the first time in their lives they are free from the surly bonds of being human! They are free of all the aches and pains that go with a human body. They are free from all the stress of life. They are free from all the

demands under which we live every day whether that be demands of work, other people or just the simple demands of the human body.

Remember the way you felt as an elementary-age child when you woke up on the first day of summer vacation? Those 90 or so days of summer seemed like an eternity of joy filled with sleeping late, playing hard, exciting vacations and no homework! I imagine that is what it feels like when you die. Suddenly, you are unfettered by all the human weakness you have become used to bearing day in and day out! Suddenly, you have all of eternity laid out before you to have unimaginable adventures and just like three months seemed an eternity when you were 10, this time it really is an eternity.

On All Saints Day we pray in our Collect of the Day, "You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical body of Your Son, Jesus Christ." Faithful people of *ALL TIMES AND PLACES*. The ones who have gone before us *ARE NOT DEAD!* They are on to new adventures and exciting lives with God and they are looking forward to us joining them. For many children, the highlight of summer vacation is a trip to see extended family. Maybe they haven't seen them in a long time and they are very excited to be reunited. That's how it is for us when our bodies die. We are headed for an eternal reunion and looking forward to being with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today is a day we rejoice in knowing that that day is coming for us all. We will be released from all the things that bind us and stress us on this earth. That's what the Beatitudes are all about in the Gospel. Blessed are you. Even when all kinds of difficult situations bombard you, blessed are you! Rejoice and be glad for yours is the kingdom of God! You will soon stand in the throne room of heaven rejoicing in an eternity of freedom and joy that is hard for us to even imagine right now as we trudge through the persecutions.

"I'm not dead yet!" On this All Saints Day, we remember all the people we love to whom we have bid farewell when their mortal bodies ceased to function. But we take comfort in the fact that they are not dead. No! They live and they reign in heaven with our Father and the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ who will soon return to this world with angels and arch-angels and all the company of heaven. And those who have preceded us will rise from the dead and we will all receive new, resurrected, perfected, holy bodies and we will continue our lives as human beings in the presence of our God forever.