November 1st, 2026

“Unbelievable grandeur.” All Saints Day’s Sermon.

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.”

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

All Saints Day. A good day to reflect on what we all are part of, where we as Christians are involved and what to expect. I want to share with you something that I hope will leave you as shaken and overwhelmed as I once was.

You know how many in Western society look down on the Church of Christ. Despising her. And we probably don’t even realize how deeply our self-understanding as Christians can be shaped by others, especially those with greater cultural influence.

As a result, it is not surprising that even many among Christians perceive the Church as a bit odd, to put it mildly, as one more religion among others. Or as mainly a human institution, not particularly popular in many places, and outright persecuted in others.

And thus, we may come to see ourselves as out of step with this rapidly changing world, bizarre people still holding to strange beliefs from an ancient book, written more than two millennia ago. What beliefs? Beliefs like these.

That there is a God who created everything and still keeps this world going, every day and every minute. Beliefs that we all are created in the Image and likeness of that God, incredibly precious in His eyes, and that therefore every human life is sacred, those who are yet to be born, and also those who may seem like a burden to others due to their old age or sickness. Beliefs that we are wonderfully created as men and women, for this grand mission - to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the Earth.

Beliefs that God Himself instituted marriage that consists of one man and one woman united by their vows till death do part them, and that this God-given institution is the best setting to raise children. Beliefs that our very nature is so deeply corrupted, selfish and hostile to God that we can’t even comprehend it.

Beliefs that this God became one of us two thousand years ago and was known as Jesus from Nazareth and that He died naked on the cross. Why? Because He so loved the world that He had created that He wouldn’t abandon us; He did it to take care of our corruptions, sin is the word, to free us from spiritual powers that enslave us, and to restore our relationships with our loving Creator.

Beliefs that this God arose again and will come to judge the living and the dead and that we all will need to give an account of how we have lived this life. Beliefs that those who respond to His invitation and want to be with this God will live in divine joy

and blessedness in the age to come in New Heavens and Earth. Strange beliefs, indeed, at least in the eyes of the world. But the hostile and spiteful attitudes of the unbelieving world too often shape our view of who we are as Christians. We may be embarrassed or even ashamed to confess our Christian faith, hiding it from our families, co-workers and friends. But remember these words of Jesus:

"**Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels**." [Mark 8:38]

You see, your God is not ashamed of you, neither to be called your God. We need to be reminded of how God the Father sees us. **How majestic, how beautiful, is the Church** - the holy community of God's saints, the Bride of Christ in His own eyes.

Let me share with you something from the day when the Lord graciously gave me a glimpse of the grandeur of the hope that He has given us. In Seminary we had been reflecting and discussing several remarkable passages from the New Testament.

As the dots were connecting and the meaning of those verses became clearer, I was so overwhelmed, almost shaking, struggling to believe the magnitude of the words the Spirit had opened for me. I will read you some of those verses from the Scripture, that gave me that glimpse and those shivers, and may the Spirit bless you as He chooses.

"**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him**." [Eph 1:3-4] You may have known the true God your entire life, but the Triune God had chosen you already before the foundation of the world to bring you into His family through Jesus. He made sure that you are here.

"**You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers [...] with the precious blood of Christ, like that of *a lamb* without blemish or spot. *He was foreknown before the foundation of the world* but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you**." [1 Pet 1:18-20]

What does this mean? Already before the foundation of the world the Triune God had set in motion His plan of salvation, where Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God would sacrifice Himself so that He can ransom you and set you free. Next one...

"**God... saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of *his own purpose and grace*, which he gave us in Christ Jesus *before the ages began***." [2 Tim 1:8-9] "... ***in hope of eternal life*, which God, who never lies, *promised before the ages began*."** [Titus 1:1-2] You are here because of God's purpose and grace, given you in Christ Jesus before the ages began. Already then, God promised to His elect eternal life. Before the ages began, He promised you eternal life!

Furthermore, this is not something that was just spoken and the words may be forgotten. This for our minds unfathomable hope is firm and certain. Why would I say that? Because of this testimony from the book of Revelation. Just listen!

"**All who dwell on earth will worship [the beast], everyone whose name *has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life* of the Lamb who was slain**." [Rev 13:8] As for you, dear Brothers and Sisters, whose name is written in the Book of Life, who are united with Jesus, to whom the truth has been revealed, this is what God has prepared for you. In the words of Jesus: "**Come, you who are blessed by my Father, *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world***." [Mat 25:34]

The Kingdom, the New Heaven and Earth, prepared for you! When did that happen? When did He choose to bless you? From the foundation of the world! This is so much. Too much. Beyond us. But this is how special you are for the Triune God. This is what your gracious Father in heaven has prepared for you. From before the foundation of the world.

Prepared *for you*! If the Spirit helps this to sink it, this has to blow our minds and make shivers run down the spine. If only we could understand how important the Church is to the Triune God. He calls us the Bride of Christ. Again, from Revelation: **"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."** (Rev 21:2) And as we heard it in our today's reading, this is what this Bride will look like, this is what awaits you and all the saints of God. God the Father ordered John to write this down so that you can hear this and rejoice:

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"" (Revelation 7:9–10)

This is who we truly are. All God's Saints. With our physical eyes, we cannot see the magnificence, the beauty, the sheer grandeur of God's vision for His Church. It is with our ears - listening to the Word of God - and with our God-given imagination that we can begin to perceive what the Christian Church actually is. How God sees you. And it is so far beyond anything we could have ever dreamt about and hoped for!

But… if you listened carefully to our today's reading from Revelation you may also have heard something not so pleasant to our ears and not so desirable to our imagination. How did those multitudes clothed in white robes get there? "**These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation**." The great tribulations. That doesn't sound good.

Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount help us to understand those tribulations. He says blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the lowly and those who hunger for righteousness. Who is He talking about? He is talking about us. About you. We are **the poor in spirit**, when we realize that there is nothing that we haven't received, that there is nothing that we can bring to our God. We are **those who mourn**. For the closer we are to our Lord, the clearer we see the evil and brokenness of this world. In ourselves, in our

loved ones, in people and society around it. We are **the lowly**. For we realize that we are not in control. We don't rely on our strength or wisdom, or connections, or abilities, we rely on the Lord, who daily opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing.

We are the ones, **who hunger and thirst for righteousness**. The light of Christ changes the way we see the world and suddenly we see how much selfishness, how much injustice is all around us. We hunger and thirst for the day when God's righteousness will be restored. These are the tribulations we live in. If that is you, then blessed you are, Jesus says, for your God and Father assures you that, what you long for, will be given to you.

Many of these experiences don't immediately sound like blessings to us. Do they? So, Jesus doubles down, just to assure you that if this is what you experience, then you are indeed in the greatest company: "**Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you**." Rejoice and be glad in such tribulations! Your reward is great!

For you are in the same boat with all the great saints of old, with the prophets and the apostles. For that is how they too experienced the greatest of God's blessings, His very presence with them – in the midst of their tribulation.

And as you experience this in your lives, the Spirit holds before your eyes the hope that has no equal. John puts it this way: "**We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he** [the Risen and Glorified Lord Jesus] **appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."** You shall be like the glorious Lord Jesus. You shall see Him as He is.

You. John speaks about you! Indeed, the saying is true: "**What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,** [that is] **what God has prepared for those who love him**". [1 Cor 2:9] That day is coming to all of us. The most joyful day ever.

The day when we will become who our God always intended us to be. Glorious, good and beautiful like His true Son Jesus. When you will reach your final destination, when you will join all the saints, and when you will experience what John writes about, then: "[You will be] **before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter** [you] **with his presence.**

[You] **shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore [...] For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be [your] shepherd, and he will guide** [you] **to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from** [your] **eyes**."

That is God's promise. That is our hope. That is Christ's vision for His beloved Bride. For you. Unbelievable grandeur! All the saints who have gone before us are there already. And our turn is coming soon.

Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Amen.