

## A Rhyme for All Saints

Fr. Nick Smith

If saints ye seek, both brave and meek,  
in scripture and in song,  
Ones with fame, whom we can name,  
The list, you'll find, is long.

Those who were bold in days of old,  
Apostles and the sort,  
Who fought the fight and lived just right  
To earn a good report.

Why, some of those, God only knows,  
We've named our churches for:  
Like Paul and John and on and on,  
Writ large above the door.

Familiar names, important claims  
Are made on their behalf,  
Of righteous deed and faithful creed,  
A hallowed epitaph!

But meanwhile now, we should somehow  
Be saints in our own times,  
Who pray for all who trip or fall,  
(Or something else which rhymes...)

One need not be of pedigree,  
Or be of high repute,  
Just run the race, and claim your place,  
And bear some useful fruit.

It might be best, if to be blessed  
As saints forever more,  
We'd live these days in thanks and praise...  
Could be *that's* our chore.

At any rate, dish on your plate  
Some joyful wish to serve.  
A filling dish would be my wish,  
God's teachings to observe.

And there were three in Bethany  
Befriended of the Christ:  
Two sisters and dear Lazarus  
Whom faith in God sufficed.

One day, alas, it came to pass  
That Lazarus fell ill;  
Upon his bed the sickness spread  
Until his heart stood still.

Then in a cave they made his grave,  
As mourners lined the place.  
Our Lord arrived, and him revived,  
To demonstrate God's grace.

The Lord bid all to hear his call:  
"Come, take the stone away!"  
When they obeyed what he them bade,  
God's glory found display.

The shepherd's voice makes sheep rejoice  
And follow in his ways.  
Now with a shout, he calls "Come out!"  
And Lazarus obeys.

'Unbind him, lo, and let him go!'  
Is Jesus' next demand;  
His word they heed, his friend is freed,  
They follow his command.

But why, we ask, did such a task  
Cause Jesus then to weep?  
And be perturbed and sore disturbed  
To interrupt that sleep?

Could it just be, I ask of thee,  
He might have then preferred  
To leave his friend, who'd met his end,  
Secure within God's word?

For Lazarus, expired thus,  
Dwelt sure in Paradise.  
In mansion faire he lingered there;  
He'd paid the final price.

He'd earned his rest, had passed his test,  
From illness had been freed.  
Eternal life, now free from strife,  
Had been for him decreed.

But sisters two, and those they knew,  
Missed much what they had lost;  
Their faith was slim, their light was dim,  
First counted they their cost.

To learn God's creed, they all would need  
Now yet another sign;  
Five thousand fed, a child not dead,  
And water turned to wine,

A lame man healed, blind eyes unsealed,  
And walking on the sea,  
Had not sufficed to know the Christ  
For who he was to be.

A seventh sign doth John assign  
Here in his Gospel Book;  
A dead man raised, may God be praised!  
And all would want to look.

Four days entombed, and not perfumed,  
Sure heightened the suspense:  
The deed was done, the vic'try won,  
But know the consequence...

Our dear Jesus, and Lazarus,  
Who newly took a breath,  
By Sadducees and Pharisees  
Were *both* now marked for death!

Had Jesus wept while to accept  
His sacrifice he tried?  
Not his own end, but that his friend  
Must die *again*, he cried.

And would we choose that those we lose,  
Whose earthly eyes have closed,  
Should limbs unclench  
and bear the stench,  
And quit now their repose?

As God doth make, for heaven's sake,  
Now each and all things new,  
That precious past we hoped would last  
we must now bid adieu.

And now instead look on ahead  
And leave the past behind,  
But reverently, and tenderly,  
And seldom out of mind.

Our lineage and heritage  
Are treasures, to be sure,  
But in God's scheme, God's holy dream,  
There's always room for more.

And what of those, God only knows,  
Whose memories are pain?  
Who have regret they can't forget,  
And long to start again?

That wish to fill, such is God's will,  
As we have heard this day,  
God's promise clear, to wipe the tear  
As first things pass away.

And dwell with us in righteousness  
And always hold our hand  
As we go through whatever new  
events for us are planned.

So birthdays come, and birthdays go,  
And anniversaries, too.  
But trust ye well, the scriptures tell,  
The Lord of me and you.

And look with cheer, O Christian dear,  
Upon the coming day,  
And be not faint, for as a saint,  
Adventure is your way.

And as each day we start afresh  
To witness far and wide,  
We build new homes in which with God  
We ever shall abide.

Amen