

The Commemoration of All Saints and All Souls

2nd November 2025



No Christian is solitary. Through baptism we become members one of another in Christ, members of a company of saints whose mutual belonging transcends death:

One family, we dwell in him,
one Church, above, beneath;
though now divided by the stream,
the narrow stream of death.
(Charles Wesley)

All Saints' Day celebrates men and women in whose lives the Church as a whole has seen the grace of God powerfully at work. It is an opportunity to give thanks for that grace, and for the wonderful ends to which it shapes a human life; it is a time to be encouraged by the example of the saints and to recall that sanctity may grow in the ordinary circumstances, as well as the extraordinary crises, of human living.

The two Feasts of All Saints and the commemoration of the Faithful Departed, fall on the 1st and 2nd of November. We will make this Sunday an opportunity to remember both those who have been especial examples of the faith, (All Saints), and also to remember those we have known and loved but have died (All Souls).

The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, +
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

HYMN

1 You servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

3 Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

2 God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
And still he is nigh, his presence we have;
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

4 Then let us adore and give him his right:
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
all honour and blessing with angels above
and thanks never ceasing and infinite love.

Rejoice, people of God, praise the Lord!
Let us keep the feast in honour of all God's saints,
in whose victory the angels rejoice and glorify the Son of God.

Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses,
let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,
looking to Jesus in penitence and faith.

Hebrews 12.1

Prayers of Penitence

Lord, you are gracious and compassionate:
Lord, have mercy.

You are loving to all
and your mercy is over all your creation:
Christ, have mercy.

Your faithful servants bless your name
and speak of the glory of your kingdom:
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins, +
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect

Let us pray that we may be strengthened by our communion with all the saints.

Almighty God,
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:
grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living,
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Scripture from the Book Wisdom 3. 1-9

The Destiny of the Righteous

³ But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

² In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,

³ and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

⁴ For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

⁵ Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;

⁶ like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them.

⁷ In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

⁸ They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them forever.

⁹ Those who trust in him will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with him in love,
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones,
and he watches over his elect.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,^[a]

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.



Scripture from Revelation Ch 21 1-6a

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN

1 Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.

2 The Lord, who left the heavens
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with men,
their pattern and their King;

3 Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart,
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.

4 Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be;
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's own people,
called out of darkness into his marvellous light. 1 Peter 2.9
Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John chapter 11 beginning at the 32nd verse
Glory to you, O Lord.

³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

But what is a saint? The Bible calls all believers saints, but we also understand the term to refer to someone who does ordinary things extraordinarily well. Heroes are usually extraordinary, above the average in certain physical and mental qualities and accomplishments but they are not thereby saints; and saints, on the other hand, may have pronounced limitation of body or intelligence. What makes a saint different is an abiding holiness not from their own resources but from God, and God seems to radiate through their lives in extraordinary ways. Of course, they are not limited to those recognised by the church – there are many in the past and now who embody and transmit that difference.

Neither are they limited to those who lived long ago. The assassinated Roman Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero who died 40 years ago, and Mother Teresa who died 25 years ago have both been placed in the canon of saints in the Roman Catholic church.

We recognise and honour some people for the distinctive contribution they make to the life of the church. But they were also ordinary. Read about their lives and you will find many of the same difficulties faced by you and me. They also had to deal with physical limitations and many with much mental anguish. Mother Teresa for instance, wrestled with a sense of the absence of God and depression.

For saints, we might use the word 'luminous', there was a brightness, a glimpse beyond; suggesting that they lived in a liminal place, in a sort of borderland. Something different came from them. Not light always in a comfortable sense. Often such people evoke hostility. Romero spoke the truth, defended the poor and spoke out about social injustice. He was assassinated while celebrating Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence. Mother Teresa would rescue babies from bins and the dying from the streets and nursed them on beds over which was inscribed 'The body of Christ'.

Oscar and Teresa; they could not be more different and yet more alike. As Christians we can lose focus and such people help us restore it. Our focus should be on Jesus who is reflected through the lives of Oscar and Teresa.

Jesus was disturbing and counter-cultural, he also held the leper.

The Commemoration of All Souls is an opportunity to remember the names of our dead in the service, perhaps light a candle as a symbol of love and prayer. It affords us a specific moment to recall and reflect and is especially meaningful for those who have been bereaved recently.

But to speak of the dead raises problems. Where are they precisely? What form do they take? Will we meet them again?

From a position of faith, our understanding is based on a creator God who, when he formed all things, made time and space with it. When we die, we leave this earthbound realm of time and space and pass into the nearer presence of God. So we cannot ever think of our loved ones as 'nowhere'. Our apparent separation from them is that, only seemingly apparent.

The church speaks of the church on earth and the church in heaven. Jesus on the cross said to the thief crucified alongside him *"today you will be with me in paradise"*. St Paul speaks of us *'seeing through a glass darkly'*; it is obscured to us but not forever.

The point is that the living and dead are both alike. Christ is *'before all things, and in him all things hold together.'* (Colossians 1.17) and he *'sustains all things by his powerful word.'* (Hebrews 1.3). For anything created to fall into uncreated-ness is logically impossible while it is sustained by Christ. Whatever the form taken by those who have gone before us, they enjoy that form only because of Christ's everlasting love for them.

God's purpose is to bring all things to wholeness and completeness. This being so there is no reason to believe that our relation to God is fixed at a point of time – the moment of death - but as a process which never ends. For why would God create anything that cannot be brought into holiness, purity, and closeness? Or as St Augustine says, *'that anything should be lost for all are dear to God who is never lost.'*

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

United in the company of all the faithful
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,
let us offer our prayers to God,
the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,
that we may live as a royal priesthood
and a holy nation to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Bless Martin our bishop and all ministers of your Church,
that by faithful proclamation of your word
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles
and prophets into a holy temple in the Lord.

Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ from glory to glory.

Give to the world and its peoples
the peace that comes from above,
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love
in the service of the poor and needy;
all who minister to the sick and dying;
and all who bring light to those in darkness.
For all who seek to bring healing and relief

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin or disfigured by pain,
Lack, natural disaster and especially by war at this time.

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,
guide us to your kingdom
and grant us your peace.

We give you thanks for the whole company of your saints in glory,
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;
by your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in your love.

Blessing and glory and wisdom,
thanksgiving and honour and power,
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen.

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

Lord of heaven,
you have brought us near
to an innumerable company of angels
and to the spirits of the saints made perfect.
As in our worship on our earthly pilgrimage
we have shared their fellowship,
so may we come to share their joy in heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

HYMN

1 For all the Saints who from their
labours rest,
Who thee by faith before the world
confessed.
Thy name, O Jesu, be for ever
blest.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

4 O blest communion! fellowship
divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory
shine;
Yet all are one in thee, for all are
thine.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

7 But lo! there breaks a yet more
glorious day;
The Saints triumphant rise in bright
array:
The King of glory passes on his
way.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

2 Thou wast their Rock, their
Fortress, and their Might;
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the
well fought fight;
Thou in the darkness drear their
one true Light.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

5 And when the strife is fierce, the
warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant
triumph-song,
And hearts are brave again, and
arms are strong.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

8 From earth's wide bounds, from
ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in
the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy
Ghost.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

3 O may thy soldiers, faithful, true,
and bold,
Fight as the Saints who nobly
fought of old,
And win, with them, the victor's
crown of gold.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

6 The golden evening brightens in
the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors
cometh rest:
Sweet is the calm of Paradise the
blest.
Alleluya! Alleluya!

The Blessing

May God,
who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,
pour upon you the riches of his grace.
Amen.

May he give you joy in their fellowship
and a share in their praises.

Amen.

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness
and to come to the full radiance of glory.

Amen.

May the infinite and glorious Trinity,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
direct our life in good works,
and after our journey through this world,
grant us eternal rest with the saints.

And the blessing of God almighty, +
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

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