



## COLLECT, READINGS & REFLECTION FOR SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2020

### All Saints Day

#### Collect

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.

#### Psalm 34.1-10

- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times;   
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 My soul shall glory in the Lord;   
let the humble hear and be glad.
- 3 O magnify the Lord with me;   
let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the Lord and he answered me   
and delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 Look upon him and be radiant   
and your faces shall not be ashamed.
- 6 This poor soul cried, and the Lord heard me   
and saved me from all my troubles.

7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him   
and delivers them.

8 O taste and see that the Lord is gracious;   
blessed is the one who trusts in him.

9 Fear the Lord, all you his holy ones,   
for those who fear him lack nothing.

10 Lions may lack and suffer hunger,   
but those who seek the Lord  
lack nothing that is good.

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### **Revelation 7.9-end**

9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out in a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 singing, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen." 13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. 16 They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; 17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

## **Matthew 5.1-12**

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

## **Reflection – from Mary-Lou**

This Sunday is All Saints Day. In the earlier years of my growing up as a Christian, I didn't know what to think about saints, really. I'd picked up something of a Reformation suspicion about Saints and the thought that we might be praying to them. A wise priest said to me simply that for him, the Saints are members of the family. So I began to think of the Saints in that way too, not as obstacles standing between us and the Lord, but family members standing with us, those from whom we can learn what it is to follow Christ in faithfulness and love. And we celebrate them all today – the great ones, the familiar ones, the courageous ones, as well as the eccentric ones (some of them do seem to have had quite eccentric, not to say completely batty, tendencies!) – celebrate just as we do our own families.

So, what difference can celebrating the Saints make in our lives, right now? Our Gospel reading for today could make us feel a bit sceptical. Bishop John Pritchard points out that is blindingly obvious that not all those who mourn are comforted, and 'the merciful sometimes get a mouthful rather than receiving mercy.' But do these teachings of Jesus, called the Beatitudes, help us learn something about the Saints? They were people in whom the new, topsy-turvy world of the Kingdom of God was seen. In them, Christ's new creation could be seen breaking through! And the Beatitudes aren't a list of impossible targets we have to work towards, but the signs and values of a world we can be born-again into, through the love of God in Christ Jesus. The Saints are both signposts, pointing us in the right direction through their example, and the family that surrounds and encourages us as we make our way towards the fullness of the Kingdom of heaven.

Right now, it is so easy to be overwhelmed by the awfulness of everything as we struggle through Coronavirus. And then there are the truly terrible other things, like events this week in France, when the sanctity of God's house was violated by the murder of his faithful servants.

Many of the stories of the Saints echo such martyrdom, awful things do happen to very good Christians. We know that, Jesus told us to expect it when we follow him.

But Christ says to us: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. This means that if our hearts and minds are pure, we shall see God now, in other people and in the things that happen. If we stay transfixed by the awfulness, it clings to us, and pulls us down. Evil can be like quicksand. But if we raise our eyes, when we look for good - when we look for God! - we will see him, now. The Saints are those who kept their eyes, their hearts, and their minds focussed on God in purity of heart: we learn from their wisdom and experiences. That is part of the rich inheritance of faith passed down the generations to us! It means learning to look at everything as Jesus looked, having a heart and mind like his. Then the upside-down world can break in even in these times, especially in these times, as in the light of Christ, we become channels of grace to others. So today, we thank God for the wonderful family to which we belong and we hear Jesus say to each of us once more, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*