

# Sunday, November 1, 2020

## All Saints Day

### Introduction

All Saints celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who are the body of Christ. As November heralds the dying of the landscape in many northern regions, the readings and liturgy call us to remember all who have died in Christ and whose baptism is complete. At the Lord's table we gather with the faithful of every time and place, trusting that the promises of God will be fulfilled and that all tears will be wiped away in the new Jerusalem.

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### Revelation 7:9-17

*The book of Revelation is written to seven churches in western Asia Minor during a time of great oppression. Today's reading is a response to the question asked in 6:17: "Who is able to stand?" The writer gives the faithful the assurance of God's protection and a vision of victory.*

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

<sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom

and thanksgiving and honor

and power and might

be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

<sup>13</sup>Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" <sup>14</sup>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.

<sup>15</sup>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.

<sup>16</sup>They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them,

nor any scorching heat;  
<sup>17</sup>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**

*In the Beatitudes, Jesus provides a unique description of those who are blessed with God’s favor. His teaching is surprising and shocking to those who seek wealth, fame, and control over others.*

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup>Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup>Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

## **Sermon**

The introduction to the Gospel of Mark being offered on-line by the Anglican Diocesan College of Montreal, and led by the Rev. Dr. Jesse Zink, is asking participants to wonder what kind of leader Jesus was, and what distinguishes his program from those of the occupying Roman empire, the leaders in Jerusalem, and those who would call for a violent rebellion.

On the cross Jesus found himself rejected by each of these groups; his own disciples still unclear about the alternative he presented.

As their empire expanded, the Romans, from the emperor to foot soldiers who kept the “peace” in Palestine, desired stability above all else.

In order to collect taxes and to extract other local resources they needed to be able to establish bases of operations.

They needed commanders.  
Food and lodging for armies.  
Foot patrols.  
A dispirited and compliant populace.  
And simmering poverty.

Which means that the Roman pax was essentially a peace without justice.  
Those in occupied lands like Galilee and Judea  
expected to be treated cruelly and unfairly.

To them Jesus spoke of better days,  
when all would have food to eat, clothes to wear, homes in which to live,  
freedom from lawless imprisonment.

Which made him an enemy of the imposed state.

The elite of Jerusalem accepted the Roman yoke,  
some members more reluctantly than others.

The seventy-member Sanhedrin  
saw itself as the true government;  
that is when the Persians, Greeks and Romans had not reigned over them from afar.

Collectively they held the reins of religious rule over the Temple,  
political control over the region of Judea,  
and power over the local economy.

These were rich and powerful men and families,  
who had little concern for Jewish peasants,  
including those who lived in distant regions like Galilee.

They were more concerned about looking pious,  
than serving their people  
or God.

And while they resented Rome  
they also wanted stability in Jerusalem,  
so that whatever power they still had would not be challenged.

To them Jesus looked like trouble;  
a rabble-rouser from the country  
with no proper breeding or credentials.

Which brings us to those who would oppose Rome or the Sanhedrin by force.

They drew inspiration from Judas Maccabeus,  
who led a small army to wrest control of the Temple from the Greeks  
about 150 years before the birth of Jesus.

Like General Custer at Little Bighorn  
or Americans holed up against Mexican forces at the Alamo  
many Jews were close to digging in for a last-gasp battle.

The odds were not on their side,  
but they believed God was.

Some carried concealed weapons,  
killing Romans or collaborators one at a time.

Others whispered about rebellion.

A few held public rallies.

Many hoped for a brave and inspiring leader,  
the Temple being the place where they would make their last stand.

So when Jesus repeatedly resisted a call to arms  
by saying things like  
*turn the other cheek,*  
*love your enemy,*  
*or those who live by the sword die by the sword*  
he alienated most of those who hated Rome and the Jewish elite.

To them Barabbas was a better sort of leader,  
a man of violent action.

Which, in the end made Jesus a lonely figure.

Not even the ones who followed him from Galilee  
understood the path that he was walking,  
until, perhaps, after his death and rising.

Jesus' strange way is well described in the Beatitudes offered by Matthew.

Preaching to peasant crowds in Galilee,  
long before the march to Jerusalem,  
he spoke to those who saw themselves as victims and losers  
and not only assured them that God loved them,  
but that God would make things better,

Not by plotting or shouting or killing,  
but by love and mercy and forgiveness.

Hear them again,  
in the Contemporary English Version:

CEV translation p. 310-11

The remembering we do today and this month  
is not bluster and bravado.

It acknowledges the effects of aging, illness, injury, war....

And how God comes to us saints in the midst of sorrow and brokenness.

Amen

## Prayers of Intercession

*The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.*

P Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

A Lord of every place, the universe proclaims your greatness from generation to generation. Bless the work of naturalists, conservationists, and park rangers who train our attention to the wonders of the world you have made. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Lord of all the saints, we praise you for evangelists and martyrs whose sacrifices witness to your gospel across time and space. Inspire us by their courage to carry our faith to new people and places around us. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Lord of every nation, guide this country—red states and blue states, rural voters and urban voters, young and old—as we share in another national election. Kindle hearts eager to understand our common needs and seek our common good. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Lord of every blessing, your Son's blessing came to those living with poverty, grief, hunger, thirst, and persecution. Shape our vision of the saints to match his own. Awaken in us your call to serve all who suffer. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Lord of every venture, anoint us with the missionary spirit of the early church. Bless all new missions of our synod (*especially*). Empower testimony from new communities of faith to shape a diverse witness to your saving power. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A Lord of every time, countless are the multitudes you have called by name and gathered to yourself. Comfort us as we grieve those who have died in the past year (*here the names of those who have died in the previous year may be read*). In faith, may we join with them in ceaseless praise. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

P Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.

**C Amen.**

## Offering Prayer

A God of all goodness,  
generations have turned to you,  
gathered around your table,  
and shared your abundant blessings.  
Number us among them  
that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance,  
and give thanks for your rich blessings,  
we may feast upon your very self  
and care for all that you have made,  
through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

**C Amen.**

## Blessing

P May the God of all creation,  
in whose image we are made,  
who claims us and calls us beloved,  
who strengthens us for service,  
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!  
The blessing of God,  
Sovereign, † Saviour, and Spirit,  
be with you today and always.

**C Amen.**

## Dismissal

- A Beloved of God,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

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## Upcoming Commemorations

### **All Saints Day**

**Sunday, November 1, 2020**

The custom of commemorating all of the saints of the church on a single day goes back at least to the third century. All Saints Day celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ. On this day or the following Sunday, many congregations will remember the faithful who have died during the past year.

### **Martín de Porres, renewer of society, died 1639**

**Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

Martín was the son of a Spanish knight and a freed black slave from Panama. As a lay brother in the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), he engaged in many charitable works in Lima, Peru. He founded an orphanage, a hospital, and a clinic for cats and dogs.

### **John Christian Frederick Heyer, died 1873; Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, died 1719; Ludwig Nommensen, died 1918; missionaries**

**Saturday, November 7, 2020**

Heyer was the first missionary sent out by American Lutherans. After teaching at Gettysburg College and Seminary he was assigned to the Andhra region of India. A worker among the Tamil people on the southeast coast of India, Ziegenbalg was opposed both by local Hindus and by Danish authorities who favored a different missionary style. He was known for caring about the welfare of the whole person. Nommensen was born in northern Germany and was sent to Sumatra as a Lutheran missionary. Working among the Batak people, he translated the scriptures into their language, and honored their native culture.