

Hear what the Spirit is saying

Sunday Morning at St. Hugh's in Idyllwild, California

November 1, 2020 | All Saints' Day

Collect for All Saints' Day

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen. ~BCP 245

Revelation 7:9-17 NRSV

This lesson presents a vision of those who have survived great tribulation and now worship before the throne of God and the Lamb.

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."

1 John 3:1-3 NRSV

In this lesson we learn that through God's love, disciples are now children of God; their destiny is to be like Christ.

¹ See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is

that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³ And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Matthew 5:1-12 NRSV

The gospel is the opening sayings of the Sermon on the Mount, words of both comfort and challenge.

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.

Psalms 34:1-10, 22 BCP 627

Our Psalm response is a hymn of blessing and praise to the Lord for deliverance.

1 I will bless the Lord at all times; *
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

2 I will glory in the Lord; * let the humble hear and rejoice.

3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; *
let us exalt his Name together.

4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me *
and delivered me out of all my terror.

5 Look upon him and be radiant, * and let not your faces be ashamed.

6 I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me *
and saved me from all my troubles.

- 7 The angel of the Lord encompasses those who fear him, *
and he will deliver them.
- 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; *
happy are they who trust in him!
- 9 Fear the Lord, you that are his saints, *
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger, *
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good.
- 22 The Lord ransoms the life of his servants, *
and none will be punished who trust in him.

*Beloved, we are God's children
now; what we will be has not yet
been revealed. What we do know is
this: when he is revealed, we will be
like him, for we will see him as he is.*

1 John 3:2 NRSV

November 1, 2020 | All Saints' Day
SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES



1 John 3:1-3 A Pastoral Perspective

By William N. Jackson, Honorably Retired Minister, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Mount Joy, Pennsylvania.

John makes it very clear in this passage that it is by the lavish, generous love of God that we can rightly be called children of God. The apostle Paul is even more specific. He tells us that it is by the work of God's Spirit that we are "adopted" as God's children. In Romans 8:16–17a he writes of God's Spirit "bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." We therefore have a spiritual inheritance that entitles us to all the blessings and benefits, privileges and powers, that relationship implies. Along with being nurtured and motivated in our spiritual growth, we also have the privilege of knowing God's promises and presence in times of difficult struggle and need. Along with John's concern for theological truth, he has some practical and pastoral things to say about the strength of the family of faith in times of adversity, sorrow, or loss. No New Testament writer expresses more consistently or more strenuously the necessity of Christian fellowship to provide "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

All Saints' Day is a time when as the family of faith, children of God and joint heirs with Christ, we not only bear each other's burdens but also claim for those who have died the hope and confidence we have together in the risen Christ. Through the credibility of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we claim our legacy, which is grounded in the victory of Christ over sin and the grave. Edward Young once wrote, "Because of the love of Christ, nothing is dead but that which wished to die; nothing is dead but wretchedness and pain. What remains for us is a legacy of loyalty, of love, and of life."

How blessed we are by the loyal witnesses who have been our teachers, our mentors, our critics, and our encouragers in enabling us to grow and mature in our faith. Our legacy includes a countless number of faithful witnesses who have taught us to know and believe the good news of the Word of God. We soon learn that in times of hard trials and difficult decisions the witness of faith shared with us by our mentors continues to provide incredible strength, not only for our own benefit, but also for our witness to others. In Hebrews 11:4 the writer tells us that "Abel has died, but through his faith he is still speaking" (my trans.). Our legacy as children of God is to remember that, even though our loved ones have died, through their love and compassion, their instruction and correction, their laughter and tears, their honesty and humility, their sacrifice and dedication, and, most of all, their faith, they are still speaking. What a great legacy to claim for ourselves and to share with the world!

There is also the legacy of the unparalleled blessing of God's gift of love in Jesus Christ. That legacy is clearly defined in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, in the familiar words, "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things." There is not a clearer definition of unconditional love in Christ. There is also a promise. The next paragraph begins, "Love never ends" (1 Cor. 13:8). Our legacy in that love is personal and contemporary and also eternal.

William Penn wrote at the death of a beloved member of his family, "Those who love beyond this world are never separated." Then he added, "Death cannot kill what never dies."² Our legacy is the gift of God's love, present in this life and present victoriously in the life to come.

There is also the legacy of life. From the beginning, the legacy of life has been a primary message for John. We find evidence for that in the first paragraph of the Gospel of John: "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people" (John 1:4). The opening paragraph of John's first letter

reiterates the same claim. Life is a primary gift, a privilege from God. Jesus says, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). In today’s passage John reminds us that the life we now know is only the beginning; there will be an even more glorious future when Christ appears. Then we shall see Christ and be found in the very likeness, the very image of God. Of course, John is thinking about the second coming. We may or may not think in those literal terms; nevertheless, there will come a time for every one of us when God will purify our hearts, when we shall see Christ and behold Christ’s glory. When God thus purifies our hearts, we will see the glorious, victorious resurrection life in Christ.

John also suggests that when the glorious gift of life in Christ is seen in us, the world may come to know who Christ is and come to receive the “light of life,” which is given for all humanity. Then that life can become the means by which we will all be bound together in a common legacy.

A man was visiting in Egypt. As he sat on a public bench privately reading Scripture, an older Egyptian man came and sat beside him. When the Egyptian noticed that the man was reading his Bible, he extended his hand in introduction and said, “I have life!” Fellow believers are held together by a legacy of life, found in their common relationship through the risen Christ. “Whoever has the Son has life” (1 John 5:12).

“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory [the legacy] through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year A, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, vol. 4 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011).

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.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He 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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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.

What do we mean by the resurrection of the body?

We mean that God will raise us from death in the fullness of our being, that we may live with Christ in the communion of the saints.

What is the communion of saints?

The communion of saints is the whole family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we hurt, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer, and praise.

From An Outline of the Faith, BCP 862

NOVEMBER 1 ALL SAINTS

It is believed by many scholars that the commemoration of all the saints on November 1st originated in Ireland, spread from there to England, and then to the European continent. [...]

NOVEMBER 2 ALL SOULS OR COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

In the New Testament, the word “saints” is used to describe the entire membership of the Christian community, and in the Collect for All Saints’ Day the word “elect” is used in a similar sense. From very early times, however, the word “saint” came to be applied primarily to persons of heroic sanctity, whose deeds were recalled with gratitude by later generations.

Beginning in the tenth century, it became customary to set aside another day on which the church remembered that vast body of the faithful who, though no less members of the company of the redeemed, are unknown in the wider fellowship of the church. It was also a day for particular remembrance of family members and friends.

Though the observance of the day was abolished at the Reformation because of abuses connected with masses for the dead, a renewed understanding of its meaning has led to a widespread acceptance of this commemoration among Anglicans, and to its inclusion as an optional observance in the calendar of the Episcopal Church.

Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2018