

The Commemoration of All Saints and All Souls

1 November 2026



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.

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.

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.

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.

Invitation to confession

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.

The first scripture reading from the Book of Revelation 7.9-3rd

9 After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

“Amen!

Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!”

13 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

14 I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

“they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne
will shelter them with his presence.

16 ‘Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat down on them,’
nor any scorching heat.

17 For the Lamb at the centre of the throne
will be their shepherd;
‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’
‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

Psalm 34. 1-10

1 I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
2 I will glory in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
3 Glorify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.



4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel of the Lord encamps around those
who fear him,
and he delivers them.

8 Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
9 Fear the Lord, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.

10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

The second reading from scripture 1 John 3. 1-3

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on 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 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

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.

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

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

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 Matthew chapter 5 beginning at the 1st verse
Glory to you, O Lord.

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them. He said:

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 be shown 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 because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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

Reflection

The Commemoration of All Souls affords us a specific moment to recall and reflect on their lives of our dead and our life now without them. 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'*; obscured to us but not forever.

The point is that the living and dead are both alike before God. 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.'*

Our memories are not mere reminiscences. They are the substance of all that make us, who we are. Good and bad experiences together, we have survived to this stage of life. We have learned to process life as it comes to us. This includes living alongside the people who have been part of our life along the way. This will mean that some memories of those we knew are hard for many reasons. It may be the manner of their death, or that our relationship with them was difficult. To be true to ourselves we should acknowledge that because this also is part of who we are. Nothing is ever simple and pure; we are a mix of ambivalence and certitude.

It is tempting just to push them away and try and consign them to the past and forgetfulness. But they continue to shape our self-understanding. However, if we acknowledge them and allow them their place in our past, they can be a source of healing, a particular freedom, and a kind of reconciliation with ourselves and with them.

I had someone in my past of whom I did not have good memories. I had never wanted to confront them to deal with any of it. I heard of their death with a mix of emotions. They were now locked in time - my time, my memory - sealed at that point.

Thus, our memories of such relationships can progress no further. They cannot by death, but we can. In some rather mysterious way, changing the way we deal with those memories allows them 'to move on' in our memory. I do not mean this in any paranormal way, but simply by the development and maturing

within ourselves understand things from a fuller perception. Even so, there are some things I will leave in the hands of God.

When I recall those memories, I try and do so with 'God in the mix'. We cannot forget but we can reinterpret memories. Over time I have understood myself and so the memories. To understand or recognise unmet needs and motives, mine as well as theirs.

The 'God part' in this has brought a degree of forgiveness, of them and of myself (even just of life). A sense of release on my part, a letting go, not with indifference like throwing away rubbish, but a release into the constant mercy and loving kindness of God embodied in the person of Jesus whose loving embrace would hold us both in one embrace.

On this All-Souls' Day we hold all the good memories of those we have loved and love still. We do so with thankfulness for all that they brought into our lives.

And, aware of our own need and that we can pray for ALL Souls, may we also hold in the healing love of God - all others.

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 and guide those in the appointment of our next bishop.
We pray for all ministers of your Church worldwide
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.