

**Tuesday 1 November 2023**

# All Saints' Day



**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 For all the Saints**  
**For all the Saints**

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)  
(instrumental version)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All Almighty God,**  
**to whom all hearts are open,**  
**all desires known,**  
**and from whom no secrets are hidden:**  
**cleanse the thoughts of our hearts**  
**by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,**  
**that we may perfectly love you,**  
**and worthily magnify your holy name;**  
**through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.'

And the second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world;  
its pride, its selfishness, its greed; its evil distortions and hatreds.

Let us confess our share in what is wrong,  
and our failure to seek and establish that peace  
which God wills for all his children.

**All** Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

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.

**All** Amen.

## **The Gloria**

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

**All** Glory be to God in Heaven,  
Songs of joy and peace we bring,  
Thankful hearts and voices raising,  
To creation's Lord we sing.  
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,  
Glory be to God our King:  
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,  
Bore the load of this world's sin;  
Only Son of God the Father,  
You have brought us peace within.  
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,  
Now your glorious reign begin:  
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,  
You we praise with one accord.  
None in heav'n or earth is like you,  
Only you are Christ the Lord.  
With the Father and the Spirit,  
Ever worshipped and adored:  
Ever worshipped and adored.**

### **The 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:  
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.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

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. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

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 worshipped God, singing,

'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honour  
and power and might  
be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' 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.

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.  
They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;  
for the Lamb at the centre 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.'

*Revelation 7:9-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## **Second reading**

A reading from First Letter of St John

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. 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. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

*1 John 3:1-3*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 [Christ's is the world \(a touching place\)](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)**

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

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

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

*Matthew 5:1-12*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

I wonder why you are a Christian: did you follow a touch of God, or was it a desire to reach Heaven? Did you want to become more like Jesus? Indeed, what do you regard as the goal of your Christian life? And is this goal changing with the years?

That idea of change is wholly biblical. For example, St Paul's glorious 'hymn to love' in 1 Corinthians concludes with the words, 'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.' He means that our lives as Christians reflect God and start with a dim view like a reflection in a distant, dirty mirror. The quality of that reflection will improve as we grow in the faith but will only be perfect from the moment of our death when we see God without earthly distractions.

The first half of the last century witnessed vast changes in society, technology, and even ways of thinking and levels of education. Together, they help explain the many changes in the ways we conceive of God, Jesus, Heaven, and faith itself. Look,



for example, at Victorian images of Jesus from the start of the last century then contrast them with more recent images from the time of the millennium. Some are paintings or other visual representations, others appeared in film, others as books or poems. And look at the music his life inspired. All have changed—maybe subtly but probably quite significantly.

This proliferation of images caused a well-known Christian writer to quip, 'By their vision of Jesus you will know them!' Their idea was simple enough: if we think of Jesus as the one, true, perfect man, then our vision of Jesus is likely to be an extension of what we hold to be of ultimate value: Jesus represents what we regard as spiritual perfection.

Today in the church calendar, we celebrate All Saint's Day as an opportunity to think about the women and men regarded as holy (though we may prefer words like 'sanctified', 'godly', 'Christlike', and so on). At first sight, the lives of all these saints display a bewildering variety: equal numbers were men and women. Superficially, most were ordinary people and came from all sectors of society, lived in all ages since Jesus, came from all parts of the world, had different coloured skins, and represented every possible background.

But as we look more closely at the saints, we see they demonstrate one theme in common: all of them knew their faith needed to grow. They lived their lives in response to God and His love, but also knew that their knowledge was 'only a reflection as in a mirror'. Each was therefore determined to grow in their faith, which meant a fearless adaptation each time the vision cleared and developed.

It's worth following this line of thought. Some of us aren't really aware of anything that precipitated a Christian commitment: we were born into a Christian home and were swept along into a life of faith. Others became a Christian after an encounter with God when a fleeting 'something' alerted us to a spiritual reality. Yet others were working toward the Kingdom of God without realising it, and en route encountered people who were Christlike. The nature of that first encounter does not matter. But whatever the door through which we first entered the faith, that initial expression of faith will have been imperfect —'only a reflection as in a mirror'—and therefore in need of frequent updates.

If we are serious about our faith, we will desire for it to grow. At this point many will want to commit to great work for the church or for Kingdom work such as social action projects. They are all good. But the ways in which we grow in faith will reflect how our internal ideas of God have changed. It is therefore crucial that we ask God to reveal Himself. Only then can we follow.

This All Saints' Day, we may choose to reflect on past saints—men and women of faith who lived in previous centuries. But in scripture, the word 'saint' is always

applied to a person who is fully alive. For example, St Paul addresses his letters to 'The Saints in Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, etc.' These people were saints because their faith is valid, growing, and ever seeking to please God. Each time something external changed, so they adapted their faith to accommodate it, much like moving the steering wheel of a car each time a road changes direction or re-drafting the arguments in an essay each time new facts come to light. In the same way, we can also grow to become saints if we are determined that our faith grows and develops. A static faith is never a growing faith.

Maybe the best response to All Saint's Day is move from studying the saints of the past and start praying that we, ourselves, become saintly, which in practice means a growing sense of who God is. We could start by meditating on the phrase from St John, 'We are the children of God' with its implication of inheriting the traits of our Heavenly Father. In these ways, our ideas of God and of Jesus will change beyond recognition and become wider, deeper, and more loving. To that end, we must then ponder the beatitudes in today's Gospel, comparing ourselves to Jesus: 'Am I peacemaker like Jesus?'; 'Am I poor in Spirit like Jesus?' and so on.

Ultimately, no aspect of our faith remains out of bounds, so our idea of Heaven will change together with our ideas of who can live forever with God. If God is love (1 John 4) then we grow in proportion as we share our love: if Heaven can contain people from every 'tribe and people and language' then we must share our love with everyone regardless of earthly background. Limiting our love to the people we think of as being like us will stunt our growth into saintliness.

In all these ways we are saying to God, 'For now I see only a reflection as in a mirror' and then praying that God will help us perfect that image. As St Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:18, 'we ... are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image, changing from glory to glory.'

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**



Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
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.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Bless 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.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin  
or disfigured by pain,  
that, raised from death to life in Christ,  
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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 at all times.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Hasten the day when many will come  
from east and west, from north and south,  
and sit at table in your kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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.

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

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## The peace

May the God of peace sanctify you:  
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness  
that you may be blameless before him  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 Love each other**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

May God,  
who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,  
pour upon you the riches of his grace.  
May he give you joy in their fellowship  
and a share in their praises.  
May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness  
and to come to the full radiance of glory.  
And the blessing of God the Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 There is a higher throne**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy  
that we should always sing of your glory,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For you are the hope of the nations,  
the builder of the city that is to come.

Your love made visible in Jesus Christ brings home the lost,  
restores the sinner and gives dignity to the despised.

In his face your light shines out,  
flooding lives with goodness and truth,  
gathering into one in your kingdom  
a divided and broken humanity.

Therefore, with all who can give voice in your creation  
we glorify your name,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

## Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.



**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

God, the source of all holiness and giver of all good things:  
may we who have shared at this table  
as strangers and pilgrims here on earth  
be welcomed with all your saints  
to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.