

“For All the Saints”

Sunday November 2, 2025

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All Saints Sunday

Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen. Today’s gospel reading comes from the 6th chapter of Luke, the section known as the “Blessings and the Woes.” You are probably more familiar with Matthew’s version of this same speech known as “the Beatitudes,” which includes those immortal words, *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.* (Matthew 5:5) Each of these gospel accounts reflects the center of Jesus’ mission—the healing of the people through the power of God. At the same time, Luke’s version focuses more on the idea of holy reversals. You may remember it is Luke’s Gospel that gives us Mary’s Magnificat, where the lowly are lifted up, the powerful are brought down, the hungry are filled and the rich are sent away empty.

These gospel stories share with us the mysterious ways that God comes into our human lives. These stories are also a witness to the world that with God, all things are possible. On this All Saints Sunday, as we remember the loved ones who have gone from our sight, we also trust that we remain connected to them through the mystery of the Holy Spirit. In some religions, death is the absolute and final ending. But these stories of Jesus and his healing ministry are a witness to us that death does not have the final word in our lives, because God is the one in charge.

Today we remember that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, both living and eternal. These “saints” have shown us God’s love through their own love, and they have taught us those things that are most important in life, like faith, forgiveness, hope, mercy and trust. These witnesses have made us who we are, and we are grateful to God for their presence in our lives. Through our memories and through our continued love for one another, these saints remain with us, just as our Lord remains with us.

In verse 12 of chapter 6, Jesus goes to the mountain to pray. He calls his twelve disciples into their mission, and then he returns to the plain with them and addresses the crowd. Luke writes, *They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.*

What moves me most in these words is how Jesus meets the people where they are. He doesn’t require them to take the journey up the mountain to meet him face to face. No, Jesus is willing to come down off the mountain and to meet them in their pain and in their sorrow. Jesus recognizes that the people are vulnerable and he comforts them in their suffering.

Friends, the good news for us today is that Jesus is willing to meet us in our vulnerability. The God who created the heavens and the earth is the same God who came to earth as an innocent infant. Our God is humble and uses weakness to teach us about strength. When Jesus speaks those words of blessing and woe, he gives us hope that death does not have the final word. He reminds us that with God, all things are possible, and that God is the one who is in charge. Jesus warns us against using our prestige or power in society to convince ourselves that we can do it all on our own. Sometimes our self-reliance bubbles over into self-confidence, and we forget who is really in charge in this world.

Regardless of what the world tells us, we really do need God in our lives. We also need the saints, who remind us that it is not all about us. We need the church to remind us of our salvation in baptism and the ongoing, forgiving nature of Christ who meets us in the bread and the wine. We need a “come to Jesus” meeting each time we predict gloom and doom for the future. No one knows what the future holds, even if it looks and sounds threatening. The future is in God’s hands and it would do us all good to step back and remember that. Our real hope does not lie in the empires of the world, but in the crucified Christ, who in his own vulnerability came down from the cross to be with us.

Paul’s words to the Ephesians speak of the *riches of [God’s] glorious inheritance among the saints*...and we remember those riches today. These are not monetary riches, but gifts that our loved ones gave us that teach us about faith and love and mercy. As you reflect on the saints in your lives, I would love to hear what you are thinking. Who were the ones who shared motherly love with you? Who taught you what it means to love and support a family? Who took you hunting or fishing and who taught you how to cook or how to drive? Who taught you that loyalty and trust go hand in hand, and who was willing to go the extra mile to make you happy? Who took you to Sunday school or helped you to share the faith with your children? Who taught you the value of caring for those who are in need? Who taught you to love your enemies and to *do to others as you would have them do to you*? I’d love to hear your individual stories about the saints in your lives that I have never met. Because those saints are the people made you who you are.

The Christian faith has been handed down to us over the years through all the saints who surround us. We remember today the saints who have passed into eternal life in the last year. We remember Dan Derr, and his devotion to family and church, which meant so much to him. We remember Cheryl Brown, whose voice was that of an angel, and whose personality could light up a room. We remember Ken Fruhwirth, who served his country in the National Guard and later as a police officer in Baltimore. And all three of these folks were faithful to the Lord, and they taught us what it means to be faithful. We also remember folks who were not members, but are dearly missed by our families, such as Beth’s mother, Joy VanHorn, Melody’s sister-in-law Shirley Cruys, and

Many of you have said goodbye in the last year to loved ones and you miss them dearly. You continue to grieve their loss. Please know that you are entitled to grieve as you feel fit. No one can tell you when you should be “over it” or how much grief is too much. Please know that the family of Zion grieves along with you. We all know what it feels like to lose someone and it helps to share our grief with one another.

Today our paraments colors are white and gold, not black like Good Friday, because we know that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead. Since Jesus lives once again, we too can trust God’s promise to give us all eternal life. And we can thank God that our loved ones are already enjoying the peace and blessing that comes with everlasting life. To that good news, let us all say, “Thanks be to God.” **Amen.**