

All Saints Day Sunday 1st November

Welcome everyone, on All Saints Day.

Hymn

**All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;
Come ye before Him and rejoice.**

**O enter then His gates with praise;
Approach with joy His courts unto;
Praise, laud, and bless His name always,
For it is seemly so to do.**

**To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God whom Heaven and earth adore,
From men and from the angel host
Be praise and glory evermore.**

William Kethe

*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.*

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

Lord, speak to us
that we may hear your word.

Move among us
that we may see your glory.
Receive our prayers
that we may learn to trust you. Amen.

Penitential Rite

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

Lord, you are gracious and compassionate:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

You are loving to all
and your mercy is over all your creation:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Your faithful servants bless your name
and speak of the glory of your kingdom:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse *us* from *our* sins,
and restore *us* in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Gloria for today

Let us give glory to the Father, Through the Son
In the Holy Spirit,
**For God has made us his people,
And calls us to sing his praises.**

**Blessed are you, Lord God:
Blessed are you for ever.
Holy is your name:
Blessed are you for ever.
Great is your mercy for your people:
Blessed are you for ever. Amen!**

Collect

God of holiness,
your glory is proclaimed in every age:
as we rejoice in the faith of your saints,
inspire us to follow their example
with boldness and joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

1st Reading:

1 John 3:1-3 New International Version (NIV)

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 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.**

Response:

**Purify my heart
Let me be as gold and precious silver
Purify my heart
Let me be as gold, pure gold**

**Purify my heart
Cleanse me from within
And make me holy
Purify my heart
Cleanse me from my sin, deep within**

**Refiner's fire,
My heart's one desire
Is to be holy
Set apart for You, Lord
I choose to be holy
Set apart for You, my Master
Ready to do Your will...**

Brian Doerksen

Gospel Acclamation

**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.
Alleluia** (1 Peter 2.9)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Matthew 5:1-12 (NIV)

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 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.**

Sermon -

"I want to be in that number - when the saints go marching in." So what chance do I stand - what chance do any of us stand?

As I have prayed about this God has said the same thing to me three times over.... and so that is what I am going to say to you today...

In my book of everyday saints I was rather surprised to find "Saint" Bob Geldof KMG.... but not as surprised as he was apparently...

In his autobiography "Is that it?" Bob Geldof himself writes :
"God came down from heaven to find someone to alert the world to the holocaust which was sweeping Africa. He knocked at the wrong door.... the door of some scruffy Irishman by mistake... It was answered by Bob Geldof. Oooops! Who's he? thought God. Oh never mind, thought God, he'll do...."

And of course the Aid that poured into Africa through Band Aid and Live Aid organised by Sir Bob Geldof are a matter of history...

And I realised that whether we are speaking of Bob Geldof or Mary the mother of Jesus the basic principle is the same... God knocked, God asked... and they heard and said yes.

And in a nutshell that is it - that's the secret. And here is the second way God said it!

Our God is the God who comes and who brings his Kingdom with him... He knocks at the doors of our hearts and looks for a stable to be born in ... a new place to become incarnate....

The beatitudes that we have read in the gospel today tell us much the same thing. We need to have room in our hearts for the God who knocks to enter in.

Sometimes that space is made by knowing our own need - as with the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst for what is right... Jesus is not saying that it is good to be hungry, or poor or weeping per se.... but he is announcing the coming of the Kingdom to those who have room in their hearts to hear it.

Sometimes that space is made in the hearts of those who have room in their hearts because they reach out to others - as with the gentle, the merciful, the pure in heart and the peacemakers ...They have room because they have hospitable hearts... they have room because they have hearts that are predisposed to make room... be it a sofa, or a bathtub, or a stable.... they will make room.

The third way God said the same thing was in this story that I came across again yesterday.

A long time ago there was a village, and in the village lived five orphans. One day the king learned of their misfortune and decided to adopt them. He decreed that he would be their father and planned to come for them.

Why does the king want them? the people would ask.... but the king had his reasons.

When the people of the village heard that the children had the king for their father and that he was coming to the village to meet them they told the children what to do. "You need to impress the king", they said. "Only if you have great gifts to give will you be allowed to live in the castle".

So the children worked long and hard to prepare their offerings.

The boy, who knew how to carve wood determined to give the king wonderful wooden carving.

His sister, a talented painter, determined to give the king a beautiful painting.

Another sister, a talented musician, practised hard singing to the accompaniment of her mandolin.

The other brother, a gifted and clever student, decided to impress the king with his wisdom and learning. He studied long and hard into the night.

But one of the orphans was a little girl who believed she had nothing to offer. Her hand was clumsy with a knife, her fingers stiff with a brush, when she opened her mouth to sing it was not a beautiful melody that came forth! And her teachers pronounced her "dull" at her studies.

But she had a good heart. She spent her time at the city gates watching people come and go. She made pennies by grooming peoples horses or feeding their animals --- she

knew beggars by name, took time to pet each animal, she welcomed home each traveller and greeted each stranger. In her big heart she cared for people.

But the girl was sad because she had nothing to give the king.

After some days a man in merchant's dress came to the town. The girl...fed and groomed his donkey and offered him a place on her bench to sit and rest a while.

After a few minutes he opened his eyes and found the girl sitting at his feet and looking at his face.

"Have you sat there long" he said.

"Yes" she replied. "You seem to be a kind man with a peaceful heart and it is good to be near you".

The man smiled and said, "You are a wise girl. When I come back we will visit some more."

The man went away but came back very soon. "Didn't you find who you were looking for " she asked.

"I did", he said, "but they were too busy to see me. One was a wood carver rushing to complete a project - he told me to come back tomorrow. One was an artist - I saw her on a hillside but people said she did not want to be disturbed. One was a musician but she was so busy with her audience that she did not notice me. And the last I looked for had left the city to find a better school..."

Suddenly the girl realised who the traveller must be. "But you don't look like a king", she said....

And so it happened that the children with many talents but no time missed the visit of the king, while the girl whose only gift was the time to talk went to live with him in his palace for ever and ever.

And so... there are three ways of saying....

Blessed, holy even, are those who make time and space for the God who comes...

who say "Yes!" when he asks

.....for his power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. (Eph 3:20).

Response.

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;
**Be Thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend;**
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side,
**Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide.**

O Jesus, Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
**That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be;**
And Jesus, I have promised
To serve Thee to the end;

**Oh, give me grace to follow,
My Master and my Friend**

Oh, let me see Thy footmarks,
And in them plant mine own;
**My hope to follow duly
Is in Thy strength alone.**

Oh, guide me, call me, draw me,
Uphold me to the end;
**And then to rest receive me,
My Saviour and my Friend.**

John E Bode

Our Declaration of Faith

**We believe in God the Father,
God almighty, by whose plan
earth and heaven sprang to being,
all created things began.
We believe in Christ the Saviour,
Son of God in human frame,
virgin-born, the child of Mary
upon whom the Spirit came.**

**Christ, who on the cross forsaken,
like a lamb to slaughter led,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
he descended to the dead.
We believe in Jesus risen,
heaven's king to rule and reign,
to the Father's side ascended
till as judge he comes again.**

**We believe in God the Spirit;
in one Church, below, above:
saints of God in one communion,
one in holiness and love.
So by faith, our sins forgiven,
Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,
we shall rise with him in glory
to the life that knows no end.**

Intercessions: Based on the Common Worship intercessions for today - prepared and led for us by Mr Chris Valentine, Church Warden of St Mary's Meppershall

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind, freedom to captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
give us confidence to step out in faith and
rouse us to work in his name.
Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to bring help to the poor
and freedom to the oppressed and as you do so,
through your Spirit, give us sensitivity to people's
circumstances and needs.
Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.
*We will spend a moment remembering those known to us
who are in need of healing whether it be body mind or spirit.*
Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring joy and gladness in the memories they have of their
departed ones, instead of grief.

We will spend a moment remembering those known to us.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to proclaim that the time is here for you to save
your people. We offer ourselves as your proclaimers.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Lord of the Church,

hear our prayer,

and make us one in mind and heart

to serve you in Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Merciful Father: Accept these prayers for the sake of your
Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

Let's pray together the prayer that Jesus 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 forever. Amen.**

Notices and Birthdays

The BLESSING and SENDING

God, the source of all holiness
and giver of all good things:
grant us grace so to follow the example
of 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;
We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord **Amen**

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.**

And the blessing of God Almighty
The Father , the Son and the Holy Spirit
Come down upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Following God's saints in the ways of holiness and truth,
go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

Final acclamation:

For all the saints who from their labours rest,

**who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**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.
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**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.
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

O blest communion, fellowship divine,
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

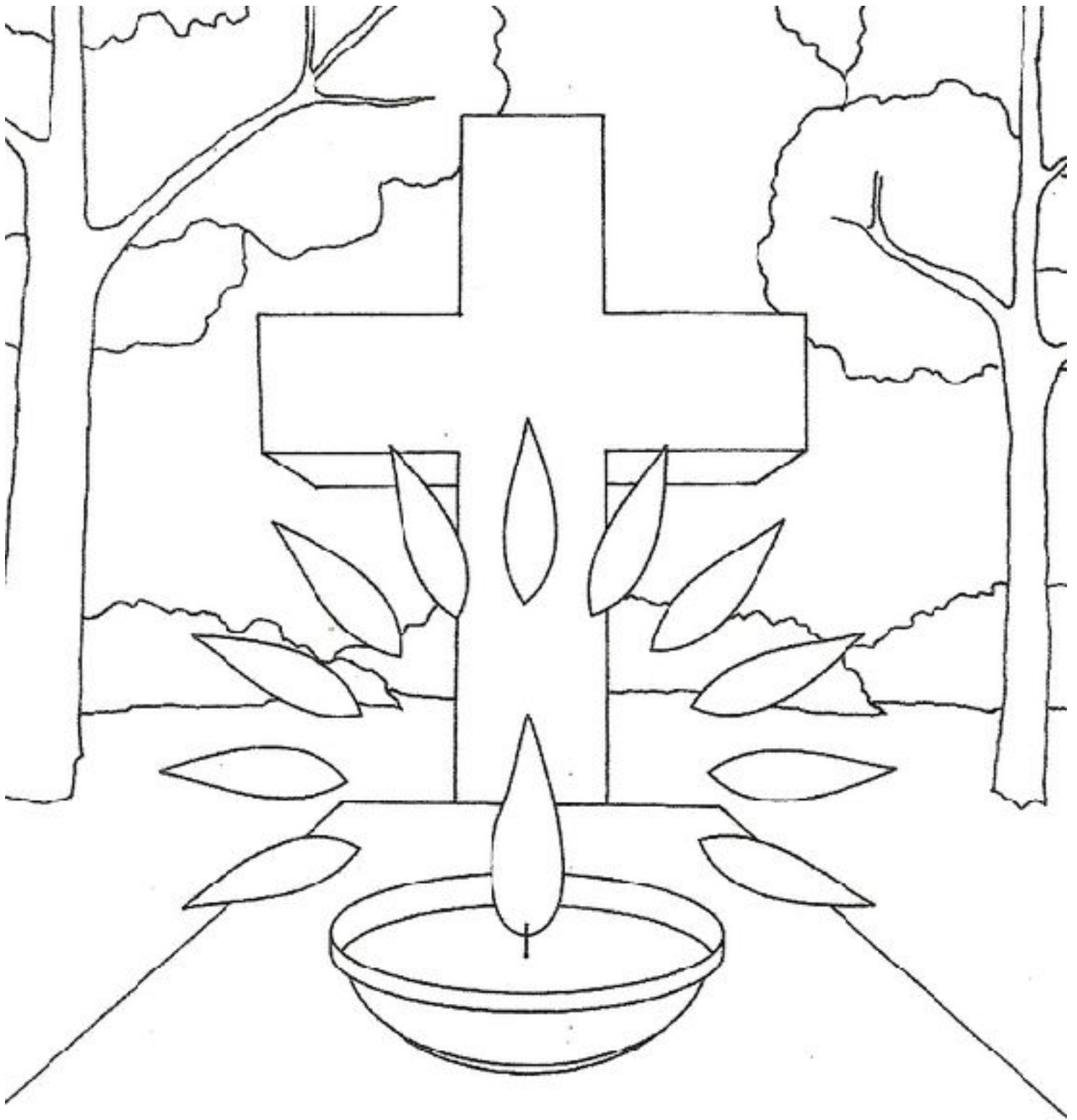
And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful warrior cometh rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

**But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
the saints triumphant rise in bright array;
the King of glory passes on his way.
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**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,
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

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You might like to think of some saints of history - or people that you know now whose godly example burns brightly.

Write their names on the flames.

GODS

LOVE

has NO

LIMITS

