

Morning Announcements & Prayers: All Hallows Eve, All Saints & All Souls (Oct 31, Nov 1, Nov 2)

October 31: All Hallows Eve

Good morning. Today is October 31st, the day many North Americans celebrate Halloween. Halloween is short for “All Hallows Eve” – the night before the Solemn Feast of All Saints. Christians traditionally prepared for this great feast with prayers and fasting the night before. In some countries, they would pray together at church and then light candles at the graves of loved ones who had died. The custom of trick or treating comes from parts of Europe where groups of poor children would go begging from door to door. Families would give them a small loaf of bread marked by a cross, called a soul cake, if the children promised to pray for the family and souls of its members who had died. Our Halloween customs come from different places and times – not all of them are Christian. The one important thing we can remember about All Hallows Eve is that it is a day – not for the dead, but for remembering all who in this life and in the next are alive in Christ.

Let us pray:

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

And now, let us listen to God’s word.

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 2: 19b-22)

You are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

The word of the Lord.

- Thanks be to God

Question for Reflection:

God created me to live with Him forever. Who are the friends and family members now passed on, that I wish to remember on this All Hallows Eve?

Let us bring them to God as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

Dear God, you created me to know, love and serve you in this life, and to be with you forever in the life to come. I pray for all my deceased family members, friends and for all who have no one to pray for them. In your great mercy, bring them into the fullness of your heavenly joy. I make this prayer to you in Jesus’ name. Amen.

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

November 1st: Solemnity of All Saints

Good morning. Today is November 1st, the Solemn Feast of All Saints. All who follow Jesus are members of the communion of saints. And today, we, the saints on earth - the *Church militant* - celebrate the saints in heaven - the *Church triumphant* - who share in Christ's resurrection and triumph over death.

Not everyone in heaven has been given the special title of "Saint." There are many people in heaven who led ordinary lives of love for God and neighbour. They are grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, neighbours, priests and religious. One day, God willing, we will meet them again. These are persons who did simple things with great love, looking after their families or caring for the sick and hungry, showing kindness to their neighbour, or spreading the word of God, and praying for the needs of others. These humble people who now sing God's praises in heaven are also saints, even though we may not know all their names.

Let us pray:

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

And now, let us listen to God's word.

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 5: 1a,2, 5-6)

When Jesus saw the crowds, 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 merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Question for Reflection:

Becoming a saint starts with a "yes" to Jesus' gift of his holiness.

What small act of kindness can I resolve to do each day to let Christ's holiness shine through me?

- Perhaps a simple "hello", helping around the house, or including others in a game...

And now, let us glorify God with the Saints, saying the *Glory Be* prayer:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Dear God, we praise and thank you with the saints in heaven for sharing with us the gift of Christ's holiness. Lead us to walk with faithfulness and joy in the power of your Holy Spirit, until we reach our heavenly homeland in the company of Jesus and the saints in heaven. We ask you this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

Nov 2: All Souls Day

Good morning. Today is November 2nd. It is the day when Christians have traditionally prayed for the souls of the dead who are in purgatory. There, they wait in love with painful longing as they are purified of all attachment to what is not of God, before entering their heavenly rest. These holy souls, along with the saints in heaven and the followers of Jesus here on earth are part of the communion of saints. They are members of the body of Christ, called the *Church suffering*. Our prayers and sacrifices offered for their needs are a great act of kindness that helps them along the final steps of their journey into the fullness of God's heavenly light. These acts of kindness will never be forgotten. When these holy souls reach heaven, they in turn pray for us in our needs.

Let us pray:

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

And now, let us listen to God's word.

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1Cor 15:20-22)

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

The word of the Lord.

- Thanks be to God.

Question for Reflection:

Jesus died and rose to give us a share in his gift of eternal life. Is there someone I pray for who has died? Let us remember that the kindness of our prayers for the dead will be repaid as a great blessing to us in this life and in the life to come.

Let us place our needs and those of our friends and families in God's hands, using the prayer Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

Dear God, we thank you for your promise of eternal life through the death and rising of Jesus your Son. We entrust to you on this special day all our friends and loved ones who have died with confidence in your great mercy for all your children. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

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