



Sunday 1st November 2026

All Saints Day

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5.1-12

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Other readings:

Revelation 7.9–end

Psalms 34.1–10

1 John 3.1–3

Homily

We live in a world that runs on lists. Important dates and times, shopping lists, to do lists – the list goes on, if you'll pardon the pun!

All Saints Sunday gives us an important list from Jesus which we call the Beatitudes. What might these words mean for us today? Who are the saints we celebrate?

We often name the saints as those who lived their lives in such a way that we remember their faith. They are the ones who made a mark upon Christian history, whom we commemorate in our church calendar, or depict in our stained-glass windows. They inspire us in life and faith.

By way of example, think of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her incredible response to God's incredible calling, or St Francis and his embrace of poverty and love of creation.

We find another way of thinking about the saints in the New Testament. St Paul often talks about the saints as his fellow Christians. The saints are people like you and me: the living Church, the body of Christ, here and now.

Both ways of thinking about the saints are right. The saints are the holy ones who have gone before us, who set us an example for our faith. They are the holy ones we sit next to in church on Sundays. They are the holy ones we don't always recognise in our communities, quietly and faithfully doing the work of the gospel.

How do we recognise these holy ones of God.

It can be tempting for Christians to treat faith as a list of boxes to tick: Go to church, do a good deed for the day, give some money towards a charitable cause.

Do the Beatitudes work as a checklist for faith? Jesus' list of blessings is not so straightforward. As we so often discover, the way of Jesus is more unexpected.

While human beings are more likely to call people blessed if they're more powerful or richer or happier than other people, Jesus does not give a list of blessings for those who go to church, or do good deeds, or give lots of money to charity.

Jesus says something quite different: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

These are not the people whom the world thinks of as blessed. The poor in spirit are those who understand their need for God, not the ones who have everything sorted in their lives. Those who are mourning may not feel that the grief they carry is a blessing. Those who hunger for righteousness are probably living under oppression and longing for freedom.

Yet Jesus calls them blessed, and reminds us that the ways of the kingdom are not the ways of the world.

We have a complicated relationship with blessings. Many Christians will think that if you're a good person who goes to church and ticks all the boxes on the checklist of faith, God will bless you with good luck, wealth, success or power. These are the things human beings so often celebrate in life, but they are the very opposite of what Jesus teaches. True blessings, true holiness – these are found in lowliness, in humility, in serving others, in showing mercy and forgiveness to others, and in seeking to make the world a better place.

This is what it is to be a saint: to live our lives following the footsteps of Jesus and to strive to be the people that God calls us to be.

We are all on the same journey: some of the saints have gone ahead of us, some are travelling with us, and some are travelling behind. Perhaps the Beatitudes are not our faith checklist to tick off as we go, but rather lights upon our path showing us the way of faith.

Let us learn how to be more like those whom Jesus called blessed. Let us stand alongside the poor, the meek, the mourning, the persecuted, the needy. Let us seek first the kingdom of God, and then we will truly know what it is to be blessed, in the company of all God's saints.

Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. Is there a particular saint who inspires you?
2. Are there people in your journey of life and faith whom you would describe as saints?
3. How might the Beatitudes inspire what we do as a church community?
4. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
5. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*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.*

(Or)

*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.*

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