



# All Hallows, All Saints and All Souls Days Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 The Fundamental Connectedness of Humanity



We are closing in on the end of the church year, but before we arrive there toward the end of November, we celebrate three events which flow one from the other and which are often confused because of history and culture. I refer to All Hallows, the eve of All Saints Day, All Saints Day itself, (November 1<sup>st</sup>) and subsequently, All Souls Day (November 2<sup>nd</sup>). To understand each, we need to distinguish each from the other, but we also need to understand the thematic connection between them. So, let's do that here and now.

All Hallows is significant, grounded as it originally was in pre-Christian Celtic practice. For the Celts, the dates October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> were restless times. As summer moved into darker and colder months, these two days were considered the time when veil between earthly reality and the spirits of the dead would thin-out. It was a frightening time, when Samhain – as it was called – the spirits of the dead would look for a body to possess. Christianity was reserved about this tradition, adopted it but because the Celts refused to give it up as their end of Summer Festival. Through the Christian lens, it became that time when believers asked for God's blessing and protection from evil in the world. People would dress in costumes of saints or evil spirits and act out the battle between good and evil around bonfires. That's the source of the modern observance of Halloween.

All Saints Day that follows Halloween, is altogether more hopeful, in that it looks toward the saints of history, for inspiration and encouragement. What stands as central to this festival, is the idea of our connectedness with those saints who have preceded us in both the faith and in life. Together, as the Letter to the Hebrews puts it, we are a community, a fellowship through and beyond history

All Souls Day, that follows All Saints Day, enjoys another emphasis: namely a day when Christians pray for all souls, all people, who have preceded us, saints or otherwise. In a sense, this latter emphasis is what is fundamental to the Latin "Day of the Dead" (Día de los Muertos), where the dead are honoured and interceded for.

Taken together, all three celebrations, affirm life over death and community, connectedness over isolation: a horizontal connectedness with others who live in our time, and a vertical connectedness with those who have gone before us: both saints and sinners.

## GATHERING

### Announcements

#### **We prepare ourselves: Sing praises all you people (Taizé)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQsqK\\_hMkl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQsqK_hMkl)

#### **Greeting**

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

The Lord be with you

***and also with you***

#### **We light the Christ candle**

#### **Hymn: Sing all creation (TiS 61, James Quinn, Iste Confessor)**

#### **A Community Prayer**

In this opening prayer I invite you to consider someone who has helped give shape and meaning to your faith. It may be a family member, friend, school leader, minister, or historical figure. It could even be someone who may not formally subscribe to Christian faith, but who has grounded you in your ethical understandings, your appreciation of fairness and justice. I shall invite you at the end of this collective prayer to say this person's name.

O God, we come into this sacred space,  
mindful of the generations of faith who have come before us:  
adults and children, certain and questioning,  
men and women, hopeful and despairing.

We give thanks for the welcome all receive from you, Lord,  
and for the ways we continue to be enfolded into community.

With grateful hearts, we mention now the names of those who have  
shaped our faith, encouraging us as saints in your realm...

*People may mention aloud the name of the one who has influenced  
their Christian identity*

#### **Confession**

In our worry, despair and disconnectedness, for you God, we wait...

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

When tears threaten to overwhelm us, we wait...

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

When we long for a fresh start and newness of heart, we wait...

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

When we consider the state of our world in its disconnectedness, we wait...

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

***We wait...***

When we have done all that we can, for you,

***O God, we wait...***

**The Peace**

**SMG**

### **Some Observations about Saints and Sinners**

Every saint has a past and every sinner has future

**Oscar Wilde**

Virtue is something you have to get good at, like playing the trombone or tolerating bores at parties. Being a virtuous human being takes practice; and those who are brilliant at being human (what Christians call the saints) are the virtuosi of the moral sphere - the Pavarottis and Maradonas of virtue.

**Terry Eagleton**

God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners.

**Soren Kierkegaard**

To me, there are saints every day. They stand up and help others and live for others and do things for others.

**Theodore Melfi**

To be mad is to feel with excruciating intensity the sadness and joy of a time. To maintain it is difficult. We either slacken and fall back, accepting the relief of a rational view and the approval of others, or we may push on, and, by falling, arise. When and if by our unforgivable stubbornness, we finally burst through to worlds upon worlds of motionless light, we are no longer called afflicted or insane. We are called saints."

**Marilynne Robinson, Gilead**

### **BREAKING OPEN THE WORD**

The readings on offer for today vary: one possibility is to use the readings for Year A of the lectionary set down for All Saints Day, or for All Souls Day. Alternatively, there are also the lectionary readings for Pentecost 24A. In choosing the readings I have, I have opted to adopt a synthesis, a mixture of readings, and have decided this way on the basis of those readings which I think connect best with the "All Hallows, All Saints, All Souls" themes. The Hebrew reading of Ruth 1:1-18, comes to us from Pentecost 24B, Psalm 149 from All Saints Day – Year C, Hebrews 9:11-14, from Pentecost 24B, and the Gospel, Luke 6:20-31, (The Sermon on the Plain), from All Saints Day – Year C.

### **Ruth 1:1-18 (Good News Translation): Ruth a Saint before Saints** Seng Eng Low

The book of Ruth could be classified as a 'short story'. While it is set a time long before even king David (hence the book is placed after the book of Judges) most scholars would date the writing of the story to a much later time, after Israel had been in exile in Babylon. It is at that time that questions of how foreigners could become worshippers of Israel's God arose. The first chapter of Ruth, moves back and forth between emptiness and fullness. It begins with famine and ends with food available again in Naomi's, the mother-in-law of Ruth, homeland (see v. 6). Naomi's life begins with fullness – a husband, two sons and two daughters-in-law – and ends in emptiness with only memories of her family and unable to provide for the one daughter-in-law who wants to tag along (cf. v. 21). In contrast to her name meaning 'pleasant', Naomi's experience has been bitter and later she suggests to the women of Bethlehem that she should be called Mara, 'bitterness' (v. 20). But, it is to this one that Ruth clings and to whom she will be faithful. While she is urged to return to her own people, land, customs and god, she chooses rather to stay with her widowed mother-in-law. We should not lose sight of the difficulty of such a choice. It would mean living among an unknown foreign people. She will enter a foreign land and encounter new customs. Most of all she will claim a strange god as her own, a god who, in her experience, has so far only dealt harshly with Naomi through famine and death. Ultimately Naomi's death will be that of Ruth too (v. 17), and death seems to be the only certain thing about this life Naomi and Ruth now endure.

**1** <sup>1-2</sup> Long ago, in the days before Israel had a king, there was a famine in the land. So, a man named Elimelech, who belonged to the clan of Ephrath and who lived in Bethlehem in Judah, went with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion to live for a while in the country of Moab. While they were living there, <sup>3</sup> Elimelech died, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons, <sup>4</sup> who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About ten years later <sup>5</sup> Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left all alone, without husband or sons.

<sup>6</sup> Sometime later, Naomi heard that the LORD had blessed his people by giving them good crops; so she got ready to leave Moab with her daughters-in-law. <sup>7</sup> They started out together to go back to Judah, but on the way <sup>8</sup> she said to them, “Go back home and stay with your mothers. May the LORD be as good to you as you have been to me and to those who have died. <sup>9</sup> And may the LORD make it possible for each of you to marry again and have a home.”

So, Naomi kissed them good-bye. But they started crying <sup>10</sup> and said to her, “No! We will go with you to your people.”

<sup>11</sup> “You must go back, my daughters,” Naomi answered. “Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry? <sup>12</sup> Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons, <sup>13</sup> would you wait until they had grown up? Would this keep you from marrying someone else? No, my daughters, you know that's impossible. The LORD has turned against me, and I feel very sorry for you.”

<sup>14</sup> Again they started crying. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye and went back home,<sup>[b]</sup> but Ruth held on to her. <sup>15</sup> So Naomi said to her, “Ruth, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god.<sup>[c]</sup> Go back home with her.”

<sup>16</sup> But Ruth answered, “Don't ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. <sup>17</sup> Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the LORD's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death<sup>[d]</sup> separate me from you!”

<sup>18</sup> When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

The word of the Lord  
***Thanks be to God***

**Psalm 149 (NIV)**

Colin Bradford

Psalms 146-150 form a grand doxology at the conclusion of the collection of biblical psalms. Each of the five psalms in this final small collection begins and ends with the word *Hallelujah*, ‘Praise Yah(weh)’ or ‘Praise the Lord’. The collection is literally an expression of all parts of creation proclaiming praise. Correspondingly, there is also within this collection a focus on the various praiseworthy qualities of the Lord. Psalm 149 needs particular comment in this collection. This psalm focuses on ‘the faithful’ (Heb. *hasidim*) who praise Yahweh. One might expect the subject to be all creation or ‘all flesh’ following Psalm 148 and anticipating Psalm 150. However, Psalm 149 takes us back to Yahweh’s own people. Moreover, they are not a people who have acted in their own strength or power. Verse 3 describes them as the ‘*anawim*’ (NRSV: ‘the humble’; elsewhere ‘the poor’). The same term has been used in the past to refer to those who are dependent upon Yahweh’s compassion (Pss 9:19; 10:17; 22:27; 25:9; 34:3; 69:33; 147:6).

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD.

Sing to the LORD a new song,

***his praise in the assembly of his faithful people.***

<sup>2</sup> Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;

***let the people of Zion be glad in their King.***

<sup>3</sup> Let them praise his name with dancing

***and make music to him with timbrel and harp.***

<sup>4</sup> For the LORD takes delight in his people;

***he crowns the humble with victory.***

<sup>5</sup> Let his faithful people rejoice in this honour

***and sing for joy on their beds.***

<sup>6</sup> May the praise of God be in their mouths

***and a double-edged sword in their hands,***

<sup>7</sup> to inflict vengeance on the nations

***and punishment on the peoples,***

<sup>8</sup> to bind their kings with fetters,

***their nobles with shackles of iron,***

<sup>9</sup> to carry out the sentence written against them—

***this is the glory of all his faithful people.***

***Praise the LORD.***

**Hebrews 9: 11-15**

This passage reflects a development in the author’s theme of Jesus as high priest. The major focus up until at least chapter 7 was on Christ’s heavenly activity as high priest, in particular, his prayers on behalf of those who are following him on the journey to the heavenly world. He

has made it to the end without wavering. In the process he has learned what it means to be human, to face suffering, and to be under pressure to give up your convictions and faith. The emphasis was on Jesus the sympathetic high priest.

At the same time the author has a secondary agenda: to show that this new form of faith is much better than what the old system offered. The old system was based on fallible human beings, centred on an earthly material temple, and had very imperfect, mortal high priests - nothing permanent and pure. The old system served only to point forward the new system, which reflects the real world of the heavens, deals with people's real needs and has Christ as a high priest who is so much better qualified.

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. <sup>12</sup> He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining<sup>[b]</sup> eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. <sup>14</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,<sup>[c]</sup> so that we may serve the living God!

<sup>15</sup> For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

### **Luke 6:20-31 (NRSV)**

Colin Bradford

Today's Gospel reading concerns Luke's "Sermon on the Plain", a reading that is similar to the better-known Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew's Gospel. This reading is less subtle, more direct, confronting, as it pushes us to have the courage to face up to the real when considering the foundations of community and the way those with power undermine it. In a sense the reading demands that we "burst through to worlds upon worlds of motionless light", to borrow from Marilynne Robinson in our quotations above: to allow the light of God to expose us to who we really are in all honesty, but in the same breath, to reveal to us, who we may become if we take Jesus and the Kingdom seriously.

<sup>20</sup> Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. <sup>22</sup> "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is

great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. <sup>24</sup>“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup>“Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup>“Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

<sup>27</sup>“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you.

The Gospel of the Lord  
***Praise to you Lord Christ***

**For Meditation: Ubi caritas – Where charity is (Audrey Assad)**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_Pp0jKn1zQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_Pp0jKn1zQ)

**Some Thoughts: “Halloween, All Saints, All Souls Day: The Connectedness of Humanity**

**Offering**

**Doxology**  
***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
praise him, all creatures here below,  
praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

**Prayer of Dedication**

**EUCCHARIST**

**Hymn: Far beyond our mind’s grasp (TiS 542, Caturrog Na Nonoy, Francisco Feliciano)**



## Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you  
***And also with you***

Let us lift up our hearts.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God,  
 for your love is forever  
 and you have raised the crucified Christ from the dead.

You created all things and placed Christ as the cornerstone.  
 You made your grace known to Israel in the wilderness,  
 and through your prophets you pledged  
 your everlasting love and constant faithfulness.

You anointed your child, Jesus,  
 with the Holy Spirit and power,  
 and he went about doing good  
 and healing all who were oppressed by evil.  
 He was put to death, hung on a tree,  
 but you raised him on the third day,  
 and allowed him to appear, first to Mary Magdalene  
 and then to your other chosen witnesses.  
 So now we praise you within the gates of justice  
 and raise our glad songs of victory  
 for you have become our saviour  
 and hidden our lives in Christ in glory.

Therefore we join with all the company of heaven in their song

***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***

Through him, in him and because of him,  
We affirm the Church's faith

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

**Institution**

**Lord's Prayer**

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

***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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여  
 이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며  
 나라이 임하옵시며  
 뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이  
 땅에서도 이루어지이다.  
 오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고  
 우리가 우리에게  
 죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이  
 우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고  
 우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고  
 다만 악에서 구하옵소서  
 대개 나라와 권세와 영광이  
 아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

### **Breaking of the Bread**

Christ is the bread of joy  
***Who shares food with sinners.***

Christ is the cup of life,  
***Who revives the faint-hearted***

Let us receive what we are;  
***Let us become what we receive.***

### **Agnus Dei**

Jesus, Wisdom of God,  
***have mercy on us***

Jesus, Word made flesh,  
***have mercy on us***

Jesus, Liberator of creation  
***grant us peace.***

## **Communion**

### **Distribution**

### **Prayer after Communion**

God of heaven and earth,  
you make us one in Christ.

Inspire us with new vision of the sabbath  
becoming a community marked by the freedom to serve.

Give us strength to walk together

In Christ's name

***Amen***

### **Prayers of the People**

Emily Jacobsson

The one who prays ends each petition with the words, ***work through your saints***, and the congregational response, ***and your sinners***

### **Closing Hymn: Here in this place (TiS 474, Gather Us In, Marty Haugen)**

### **Blessing and Sending Out**

Christ is life!

Let us live  
with perception and discernment,  
without fear, with imagination and courage,  
open as the saints are to new things

Our service has ended

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

***In the name of Christ***

**Going Out: You shall go out with joy (TiS 755, Trees of the Field, Steffi Greiser Ruben)...we sing twice**

**Musical Postlude**

**Organist:**

**John Hughes**



**Day of the Dead (Día de los muertos) from Mexico, as connectedness and community with the souls of those gone before, are celebrated**

