

**Devotional Reflection, Friday, November 1, 2024**

**The Feast of All Saints**

**The Rev. David W Perkins, Th.D.**

**The Communion of the Saints**

**Key phrases for reflection from today's epistle reading:**

*32 And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection . . .*

*12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,*

You will find the full text of today's epistle reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings for All Saints Day (BCP, 1000)

AM: Psalm 111, 112; 2 Esdras 2:42-47; Hebrews 11:32-10:2

PM: Psalm 148, 150; Wisdom 5:1-5, 14-16; Revelation 21:1-4, 22-22:

David's Reflections

The writer of Hebrews felt a strong bond to the Old Testament heroes of the faith. This unnamed writer understood that those people of faith now were sharing in the full realization of the salvation they had hoped for, a salvation accomplished by Jesus. The writer saw all believers having a vital spiritual connection with those saints. They were in union with Jesus in heaven, and the writer (and we) share in that same union through the Holy Spirit. That brings us into vital connection with those triumphant saints, an aspect of the union we share with all our Christian brothers and sisters.

We refer to those who have died as “the church triumphant.” We who live and continue on mission are “the church militant.”

We say each Sunday in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in . . . the communion of saints." In three of the Eucharistic Prayers our relationship with the saints receives mention, as in Prayer D:

"And grant that we may find our inheritance with [the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, (with James') and] all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past." (*BCP*, p. 375)

The Outline of the Faith (Catechism, *BCP*, p. 862) defines the communion of the saints in this way: "The communion of saints is the whole family of God, the living and the dead, those whom we love and those whom we hurt, bound together in Christ by sacrament, prayer, and praise."

Each Sunday at Holy Communion, we join " . . . our voices with Angels, Archangels, and all the company of heaven . . . " (*BCP*, p. 362). We sing the hymns referred to as The Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) and the *Benedictus qui venit* (Blessed is the one who comes) together with those in heaven who forever sing it before the throne of God (Revelation 4:8). Linear time becomes embraced within eternity in the worship of God.

Not only do we join the saints in worship; we also receive encouragement and enlightenment from them about how to live, how to triumph over adversity, and how to be faithful even to death in the living of our faith and witness (Hebrews 12:1). Today, we especially remember in prayer our loved ones who have died, that they may grow more fully into their Lord and realize more fully the bliss of heaven.

One such prayer can be found in the Celebration of the Life of one who has died in the *Book of Common Prayer*, page 493. "O God, who by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ destroyed death, and brought life and immortality to light: Grant that your servant (*name*), being raised with him, may know the strength of his presence, and rejoice in his eternal glory; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever." *Amen*.

Today we celebrate The Feast of All Saints  
<http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/AllSaints.htm>

*Collect of the Feast of All Saints*

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.* (BCP, 245)

*Proper 26, The Sunday closest to November 2*

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

*A Collect for the Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 99)

*Of the Incarnation*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 252)

*A Prayer for Light*

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 110)

### *A Collect for Mission*

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 100, 257)

### Daily Office Epistle, Hebrews 11:32-40, 12:1-2

32 And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. 36Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— 38of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. 39Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

### Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*

Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*

Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*

Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*

Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*

Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*