

Feast of All Saints
1st November 2020

As the Covid Pandemic reaches a new severity I would invite us to begin our worship today in prayer.

Let us be still
Let us pray

Let us bring before God ourselves and our loved ones, families and friends. Let us pray for those around us in this town, for all those in this our United Kingdom, and for our world.

Let us pray earnestly for all those who suffer from the virus at this moment, especially those in intensive care.

We pray for those who minister to them, for all those facing hardship, and those who lack medical provision.

Let us hold in God's love all those who are bereaved.

We pray for those in authority: and all those who work to contain the Pandemic.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer

Dear Friends, welcome most warmly to our worship on this the glorious Feast of All Saints. And welcome to those of you who are joining us online.

Today, the Church commemorates and gives thanks and praise for those men, women and even children who, throughout the ages, have witnessed heroically in their lives to the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord and in so many instances have witnessed to that love, like Our Lord himself, unto death.

Today we remember and lay to heart the words of Blessed Paul, himself, Apostle, Saint and Martyr, that we are all called to be Saints, God's holy people.

And let us in our worship and prayers today seek and receive God's grace, that we may live up to our calling.

A large part of our Service today takes the form of a Presentation by Priest, Deacon and and Choir of a special Street Liturgy, for this All Saints-tide. This presentation contains our Hymns, Gospel Reading, and Prayers for today. You are warmly invited prayerfully to join in and enjoy this Act of Worship. We all have a vital part to play in this presentation; not least with our imagination. Not surprisingly you will find the order of the Service slightly different.

Let us be still. Let us remember Our Lord's loving and life-giving presence with us as we join with the Fellowship of the Saints, and they join with us, in our worship.

Epistle Reading
Revelation 7:9-17

Address

May the words of my lips,
and the thoughts and meditations of all our hearts
be now and always acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. **Amen**

Old customs and habits die hard. Four hundred years later we still light bonfires on November 5th and burn a Guy, however politically incorrect and religiously intolerant that may appear.

On Christmas Day, Officers in the Armed Forces still serve dinner for other ranks, which not only reflects our Lord coming *to serve and not to be served*, but the ancient Roman Saturnalia, a mid-winter Festival, which ended on 25th December. Slaves would be served a lavish meal by their masters, as well as other merriments taking place.

And last night, Halloween would have seen, social-distancing permitting, witches and wizards, ghosts and ghouls visiting houses in a charmingly menacing way demanding sweets and other goodies.

In the 9th century the Western Church moved the All Saints and All Souls Commemoration from May to November to coincide with the Celtic and Gaelic three day festival of what is spelt Samhain, but pronounced **Sow-in**. Samhain means *The end of Summer*. The festival marked the end of the light and warm period of the year and the beginning of the period of cold and darkness: the time we normally put our clocks back.

It was the time when cattle were brought back down from the summer pastures and when livestock were slaughtered for the winter. Special bonfires were lit, which were deemed to have protective and cleansing powers. Samhain was seen as a time, when the boundary between this world and the otherworld could more easily be crossed and when spirits from the underworld could more easily come into our world. These spirits it was believed needed to be appeased to ensure that the people and their livestock survived the winter. Offerings of food and drink were left outside for them. The souls of the dead were also thought to revisit their homes seeking hospitality. Feasts were had, at which the souls of dead kin were beckoned to attend and a place set at the table for them.

So far from the Church taking over secular festivals, and infusing them with the Gospel of God's saving love, it might appear that in an increasingly secular age we as a culture are reverting to them.

But just as the joy of Christmas, God's love, joy and peace for the world, and the birth of our Saviour spill over into the streets and into homes with carol singing, so I feel should the Church's joyful celebration of All Saints *Take to the streets*. Let us put the Light of Christ and the Saints of God back into All Hallows Eve and All Saints Day.

We now present a Street Liturgy, for All Saints-tide.

- Primarily of course it is an Act of Worship for us all prayerfully to join in and enjoy on this All Saints Day.
- It invites us to hear God's call for each of us to receive anew God's grace and love into our hearts and minds and to become ourselves, His Holy people, his Saints.
- Please join in the response, *Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee O Lord* in the course of our worship.

But the Street Liturgy is also something we would ask you to evaluate.

Is this something you would welcome to your home as your act of witness?

Would you like to witness to God's love by taking part in it in and around the streets of this Parish?

Well you have nearly a year to think about it and make up your mind.

So let us begin.....

Please try to imagine it is dark outside. You are not here in Church, but are sitting at home at 7 o'clock or so on All Hallows Eve or All Saints Day itself. **[Start hymn here very quietly]** Above the sound of the television, and traffic out in the street, you hear an unusual sound. It's a robed choir singing, and coming down your road. Sadly the Choir are unable to process today but hopefully you can imagine them coming closer, or going away, the more loudly or quietly they sing.

Hymn

For all the Saints

Begun very quietly by the Choir.

Each verse sung more loudly.

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

Deacon

As you open your front door you see a robed choir processing towards you,
led by the Crucifer and Acolytes with tapers. They draw closer and
eventually stop outside your house

But when 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,
in praise of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Priest

Grace, Mercy and Peace
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be upon this house
and all who live therein.

Deacon

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,
proclaiming those who are Blessed by God,
those who are truly happy

Choir member 1

How blest are those who know their need of God:
the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord
(Led each time by the Deacon)

Choir member 2

How blest are the sorrowful:
they shall find consolation.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 3

How blest are those of a gentle spirit:
they shall have the earth for their possession.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 4

How blest are those who hunger and thirst
to see right prevail:
they shall be satisfied.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 5

Pause

How blessed are those who show mercy:
mercy shall be shown to them.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 6

How blest are those whose hearts are pure:
they shall see God.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 7

How blest are the peacemakers:
God shall them his sons.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 8

How blest are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of right:
the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Choir member 9

How blest are you when you suffer insults and persecution and every kind
of calumny for my sake. Accept it with gladness and exultation, for you
have a rich reward in heaven: in the same way they persecuted the prophets
before you.

Pause

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Deacon

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to Thee, O Christ

Priest

Our Lord Jesus Christ said

I am the Light of the World
Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life.

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee Lord

Priest

Receive this light

*A lighted candle is given [is placed by the Deacon amongst the
Congregation]
to a member of the household which, it is hoped, will be placed in a
window of the home
But this morning the Christ Light is placed in our midst.*

Priest

May the light of Christ illuminate our hearts and minds filling us with
God's love joy..... and peace

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Deacon

Our Lord Jesus Christ said

Let your light so shine before other people,
That they may see your good works
And give glory to your Father who is in Heaven

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Deacon

Let us pray

O Almighty God,
You have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship,
in the mystical body
of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord:
Grant us grace so to follow your blessed Saints
in all virtuous and godly living,
that we may come to those unspeakable joys,
which you have prepared for those
who truly love you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

Priest

Visit our homes,
O Lord, we pray
And drive from them all the snares of the enemy;
May your holy angels dwell therein,
and guard those who live there in peace
And may your Blessing always be upon us
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Grant us this grace we beseech Thee O Lord

God, give us grace to follow his Saints
in faith and hope and love,

We say together the Grace

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all.**

Amen

Deacon

Let us go in peace
to love and serve the Lord

In the Name of Christ

Amen

Choir

(Tune: Tallis)

Glory to thee, my God, this night,
for all the blessings of the light:
keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
beneath thine own almighty wings.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
the ill that I this day have done;
that with the world, myself, and thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
the grave as little as my bed;
teach me to die, that so I may
rise glorious at the awful day.

*[The Choir moves off singing this final verse as a
Canon getting quieter and quieter]*

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.

Deacon

Let us be still for reflexion and prayer