

The Anglican Church of St. Francis, South Tenerife

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Walking together in faith

Dear friends,

Today, Sunday November 1st we celebrate All Saints day; remembering all those who have gone before us who faithfully bore witness to the life giving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This week we have heard of the tragic events which took place in Nice. May those who lost their lives rest in peace and rise in Glory. For those who are left behind we pray that the Lord will comfort them and heal their pain.

As we remember you all in our prayers, remember us too in yours as we seek to continue to minister to those around us.

Our bank details for contributions and regular giving during this period are given here especially for those currently unable to come to church, and for our friends abroad. It is important that we continue to generate income to support the church and meet our expenses. Your assistance is much appreciated. Please contact Gwen if you have any queries. Contact details are given at the end of this communication, after the service order which follows.

For Euros:

Bank: Santander

Account Number: 0049 5857 71 211 600 2325

Account Name: Capellania Anglicana de Tenerife Sur

For Sterling:

Natwest Bank

Account Number: 63550873

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All Saints Day – a liturgy for worship at home

Introduction

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

Today, we celebrate the annual feast in honour of ourselves, or rather as a reminder of what we have been called to be and what we hope to become and what so many have been before us – people who embody Jesus Christ, who show something of his life to others, people who are able to make God visible and tangible and human. And today, we thank God for all the people, known and unknown, who brought others a bit closer to God. So ‘rejoice, people of God, praise the Lord! Let us keep the feast in honour of all God’s saints, in whose victory the angels rejoice and glorify the Son of God.’

Act of Penitence

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints on earth and in heaven. Knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us ask for his mercy and forgiveness.

Lord Jesus, you praised those who are poor before God. Make us aware of our poverty and fill it with your riches:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you praised those in whom people find mercy. Show your mercy to us and make us merciful like you:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you praised the peacemakers. Give us the peace of your pardon and lead us to share your peace with all:

Lord, have mercy.

Blessed are you, Lord, for the mercy you show by forgiving us. Let us enter the joy of the blessed in your everlasting life. Amen.

Act of Praise

*You may like to use a form of the **Gloria**, say or sing a hymn of praise, or recite this ‘unfolding’ of the ancient canticle, the **Te Deum**:*

Men and women: praise the God of Love. Earth and sky worship the Creator.

Angelic powers of light eternal, penetrating the ancient dark: lift your voices with the song:

Holy, holy, holy, strange mysterious power, the whole creation is full of your glory. Saints and holy fools of every generation, sing alleluia, alleluia.

Prophets crying out for justice, sing alleluia, alleluia.

Martyrs who carried you in their wounds, scars embodied in their glory, sing alleluia, alleluia.

Your holy and stumbling people in all times and places, sing alleluia, alleluia.

*Giver of life, of splendour and wonder, tender, of infinite patience!
Bearer of pain, graceful and true, with wounds bringing salve!
Maker of love, flaming and passionate, guiding us into the truth!*

*Universal Christ, we greet you in your glory, hidden deep in the being of God.
Word made flesh to deliver us, brought to life by human touch.*

Glad to be born of Mary, embodying the divine, withdrawing the sting of death, terrifying us with love unbounded, offering to fulfil all we could desire, opening the road to God's presence for ever, guarding the freedom of the creation, yearning for the gathering of the harvest.

Come, then, judge and deliver us, who are freed at the cost of your life. Give us integrity to refuse what is evil; give us your Spirit to discern what is true, and lead us with all your saints to lands of eternal glory.

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. Amen.

Today's readings

A reading from the book of Revelation

I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne

and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying,
“Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing,
“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?” I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.
Revelation 7: 9 – 17

Psalm 34: 1 – 10.

Refrain: *O taste and see that the Lord is gracious.*

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
My soul shall glory in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears.
Look upon him and be radiant and your faces shall not be ashamed.

This poor soul cried, and the Lord heard me and saved me from all my troubles.

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.
O taste and see that the Lord is gracious; blessed is the one who trusts in him.

Fear the Lord, all you his holy ones, for those who fear him lack nothing.
Lions may lack and suffer hunger, but those who fear the Lord lack nothing
that is good.

*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.*

O taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

A reading from the first letter of St John

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God;
and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not
know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet
been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like
him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify
themselves, just as he is pure.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

1 John 3: 1 – 3

Acclamation to greet the Gospel:

Alleluia, Alleluia!

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest,
says the Lord.

Alleluia!

(Matthew 11: 28)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall 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 our 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. Praise to you, O Christ. Matthew 5: 1 – 12

Homily

All Saints or All Hallows Day is often described as a feast in honour of us all. It celebrates everyone who has let the light of Christ shine through their lives, and anyone who aspires to holiness in this life, although it particularly focuses on those who have led exemplary Christian lives in the past, the well-known few and the unknown many, but who are certainly well-known and important to God. The festival was originally and very naturally located in the Easter season and still is in the Eastern Church, and its original emphasis was on those who had shed their blood in the service of the gospel, the holy martyrs.

Mother Teresa, now canonised as an official saint of the Church of Rome, was once ministering to an injured man on a street in Calcutta, when she was asked by a jeering journalist, 'What is it like to be a saint?' She replied, 'why don't you find out for yourself; you too can be a saint.'

This is not just Mother Theresa's opinion. It is a biblical fact. It is a New Testament definition of those who follow Jesus Christ. St Paul, when writing to the various churches, sometimes addressed his letters to the saints or holy ones. He was not addressing a particular group of Christians within those congregations but all the Christians. However, sometimes he refrains from using that title, or he addresses a Christian community as those who are *called* to be saints. He was under no illusion that they were perfect, and although he wrote principally to teach and to encourage them, he also did not hesitate to

tell them when necessary what a miserable lot they were, and that they needed to raise their standards.

Sainthood is about holiness, love, the unconditional following of Jesus and that is clearly something that we have to grow into. As we look at the Church worldwide and within our own part of it we do well to be humble and profess that we are still on the way to sainthood because we are not yet the finished product, the final version of our life in Christ. We may want to put in other words that say the same thing: we are still in the process of being converted, of being transformed into the likeness of Christ.

That is exactly how those whom the Church particularly honours as saints would have regarded themselves in their lifetimes. Every saint has a past. It may even be worse than yours or mine. But by the grace and the Spirit of God their lives were changed. They grew in holiness and love and walked with God. In their lives they demonstrated how to keep well the great commandments that we focused on last Sunday: to love God with all their heart and to love their neighbour as themselves. And their example was recognised; they made an impact.

In the Gospel today we read Jesus' teaching known as the Beatitudes. These are words which turn many worldly values upside down. Jesus says that the people most greatly blessed, those who, in other words, are truly saintly, are often those who are deprived of many of the things that most of us enjoy. He is not saying that it is right for people to be hungry or poor or persecuted – far from it. But he is suggesting that those in such kinds of situation are much less cluttered than those who have plenty. He is saying that we all need to keep ourselves uncluttered by over dependence on material things, or on other people's opinions of us; and that we need to take a firm stand against wanting power for ourselves, and the tendency to think ourselves better or superior.

The saints we celebrate today are people who have been able to become uncluttered in their lives, those who have been able to 'let go and let God,' so that God's life and love was and is able to reach them at a deep level. God's light has been able to shine through them and enlighten those around them. We are all called to follow them, with our many gifts and talents or just the personality that God designed each of us to be, as long as we understand that if it is God's design we will be open to change and growth in our Christian life.

As we give thanks to God today for the lives of all the saints, the holy ones, we give thanks too for the fellowship we continue to enjoy with them within the Body of Christ which transcends death. That fellowship is made truly present and effective as we share in the Eucharist. Because Christ is risen, because he comes to us through his Spirit, his whole Body is here too. This means all those who have ever lived in him, all who have ever died in him, all are living and all are present, they with us and we with them as we share together in the great banquet and vision of eternal glory, the communion of the saints.

Whenever we gather for the Lord's Supper, it is as if time stops, the barriers between life and death are down, the saints surround us, and heaven breaks in. Strengthened by our communion with all the saints, living here or hereafter, let us resolve to be people who do not let the stuff of the world clutter our lives. Let us rather be transparent, open to God so that the light of God can shine through. Let us pray that by God's grace and our co-operation we may be true beacons and signs of God's mission of love, hope and healing to the world and particularly to those around us.

A few moments of silent reflection are recommended

The Profession of Faith

We believe in God the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

God has raised Jesus to sit at his right hand. Let us now come in prayer to our Father in heaven through his Son to intercede for the Church, world and all his people.

Heavenly Father we thank you today for calling us your saints, even when we slip and fall and sometimes even lead unholy lives, you see us covered in the grace which Jesus bought on the cross for us.

Lord, in your mercyhear our prayer

Heavenly Father we give thanks for your church here on earth; for our Bishops, priests and all ministers of the faith. May they and us all remain faithful to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and all your saints, and always strive for unity. We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith, may they imitate the martyrs who were bold witnesses of the gospel. Keep them strong and safe in your service. Thank you for those who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives so others could hear of your love in Christ.

Lord, in your mercyhear our prayer

Heavenly Father we thank you for every Christian who has helped us on our journey and encouraged us to keep believing when we felt like giving up. Thank you for all who taught us the faith; for Youth leaders, bible study leaders, our ministers and fellow travellers on the way. We ask your continued blessing on our Church of St. Francis and its three worship centres, and also on our charity shop

Lord, in your mercyhear our prayer

Heavenly Father we pray for those who are not yet part of your Church and also for those who have left it; convince by your Holy Spirit of your love for them. We especially pray for those members of our own families and friends who do not know or love you. We lift their names to you now in a moment of silence.

Lord, in your mercyhear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we ask that you bring peace to nations in conflict and where there is political instability. We pray for the United States as they complete their election process this week. We lift up to you the governments of Britain and Spain; may they be given Godly wisdom as they lead us. We pray for Queen Elizabeth and King Felipe and their families, that they may continue to serve their peoples with wisdom and integrity.

Lord, in your mercy....hear our prayer

We pray for those countries that are suffering real hardship through drought, natural disasters and war. Protect the poor and hungry and give them hope. Move those who have plenty to share with those who have little.

We pray today for France and particularly for the people of Nice, where innocent lives were cruelly brought to an end through an act of violence during this past week. We ask for healing and peace for all, and for due judgement for

the assailant and all others who choose to further their causes through violence and killing.

Lord in your mercyhear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for those in our churches who are sick in body, mind or spirit and ask that they receive your healing touch; be also with those who love and care for them. We continue to pray for all who are affected by the coronavirus in any way, including those whose lives are governed by the fear of it. We ask for your protection for all medical, caring and nursing staff who work within isolation units or who put themselves at risk in their work.

Lord in your mercyhear our prayer

We thank you heavenly Father for all your faithful saints who have passed from this world and now are with you. We look forward to being part of the crowd with them around your throne in Heaven on the last day.

Until then, keep us looking to Jesus and help us to give a clear witness for him, living Holy lives which you have called us to live, by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today's preface to the Eucharistic Prayer

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now we give you thanks, most gracious God, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses and glorified in the assembly of your saints.

The glorious company of apostles praise you. The noble fellowship of prophets praise you. The white-robed army of martyrs praise you. We, your holy Church, acclaim you.

In communion with angels and archangels, and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven, we raise our voice to proclaim your glory, for ever praising you and saying:

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.

God has filled our hearts with much love and wants us to be called children of God. So as God's children we can truly say to him:

Our Father.....

You may like to offer this or an alternative prayer of spiritual communion, and/or in silence just sit in the peace of the ever-present Lord for a while.

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer
but hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes
when, with your saints, I may praise you for ever. Amen.

Concluding Prayer

God our Father, thanks to their Christ-centred lives the saints of the Church overcame evil and began the building of your kingdom on earth. We have shared in fellowship with them today through the mystical Body of Jesus. By his strength may we build with them, weak and ordinary as we are. Make us in our world today a leaven of gentleness and compassion, of joy and peace and justice. For you can do all this in us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

Based on the Solemn Blessing for All Saints Day

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints, pour upon us the riches of his grace.

May God give us joy in their fellowship and a share in their praises.

May God strengthen us to follow them in the way of holiness and to come to the full radiance of glory.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us, and with all whom we love and pray for, today and always. Amen.

Let us walk with one another the Lord's new way of love and peace. Thanks be to God.

Thought for the week

'Sainthood.....is not achieved by anyone's unaided efforts. It may be consciously taken as an ideal to be aimed at; it cannot be adopted and pursued as a 'career.' Men and women become saints by living 'in Christ,' in whatever state of life to which they are called. They are able to do this by the divine grace which.....Christ freely offers to every human being according to the circumstances, capacities, and needs of each one. The saints are those who accept and cooperate with grace more wholeheartedly and more selflessly than do others.....: they become Christ-like through the help Christ gives them. St Paul sums it up in a sentence: 'I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' (Galatians 2: 20)

From the Penguin Dictionary of Saints by Donald Attwater

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