

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 1 November 2020

All Saints Day

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us.

Today is All Saints Day. A day when we look to those who have inspired our faith, but ultimately not where we look back but where we look forward to how we can live out our faith today.

Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

And also with you.

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Prayer of Thanks

We take a moment to recognise all that is good, in the midst of our lives.

Following on from this our first hymn is :

Hymn: Lord Jesus Christ

1. Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
You are one with us, Mary's son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
Pouring your love and goodness in
Jesus our love for you we sing,
Living lord.
2. Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day
Teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
This in remembrance Lord of you
Into our lives, your power breaks through,
Living lord.
3. Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
Born as one of us, Mary's son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
Risen from death to set us free,
Living Lord Jesus, help us see
You are Lord
4. Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you
Live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
Your many gifts will make me new,
Into my life, your power breaks through,
Living Lord

P Appleford (b 1925) © Josef Weinberger Ltd 1960

Confession

We now take a moment to say sorry, a moment to recognise the time we have caused pain to others, the times we have failed to act in humility and love, the moments we have let ourselves down, in the knowledge that we are held in God's forgiving love.

For the times when we have been silent or failed to notice the struggles of others.
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy**

For times when we have either by omission or action contributed towards an unjust world.
Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy**

For the times when we are beaten by inertia, and cynicism and fail to do what we can and should.
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy**

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

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.

Readings:

Revelation 7: 9-17

A vision of worship in heaven.

After this 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 for ever 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.

Matthew 5: 1-12

The challenge involved in following God's will.

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.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Rev Canon Bruce Hartnell

Good morning team! Good morning to saints of S Stoneham and St Alban, as we meet on the training ground to build up our team spirit and fitness for the coming season – not the football season true but in an even higher league than the Premier Division ahead of Southampton.

A lady once was talking to me about a previous Vicar of her parish. 'Yes,' she said 'some people even said that he was a saint but, of course, we can't aspire to that, can we?' Why not, I wondered, would it mean we were exaggerating our own importance? Is that so wide of the mark?

The problem is that we have got the halo business all wrong. We think it goes with beautiful people out of whom nothing but the sun shines. Even the universally celebrated saints tell a different story.

Take St Paul with lots of letters carefully collected in the New Testament (never mind those he screwed up and threw away as too rude to send). He had the shortest of fuses some days and went in for more sarcasm than a traffic warden. He seldom missed to chance to remind people what they owed him. We all know his work to found and build up Christian communities but at the same time he had a weakness for quarrels and always wanted to have the last word.

It's a relief to realize that those we call 'saints' were human like we are. On All Saints Day we really must be thinking of real people – not cardboard cut-outs wearing bright haloes and angelic smiles.

Jesus was born a real baby into a real family. Though the divine life came into our world in this particular person, he needed human parents and a down-to-earth family to enter our sphere. He had a circle of notoriously imperfect friends to help him keep on being human just like the rest of us.

Jesus was more of a human being, not less of one, by virtue of his death and its sequel. He needs us human beings more not less now if he is to continue his divinely human life, because now the range of his family and friends is unlimited. He spreads himself around the globe.

Harry Williams tried to define saintliness like this: it is, he thought, some quality of Christ built up in a person through the creative activity of the Holy Spirit – something of Christ revealed in that person. This may be only one quality and seen in someone who would deny they had any special talent. Mrs So and So may have the gift of putting people at their ease, calming the anxious, comforting the bereaved. Mr Y may have drive and energy to shift obstacles for people who could not do this on their own. Both may be very irritating on your PCC but, in their different ways, they are exercising gifts of God which is the essence of saintliness.

Saints are inclined to make sweeping statements and St John of the Cross four hundred years ago was no exception. He reckoned there are just three kinds of people: those who have the love of God in them but don't know it; those who realize it but don't use it and those who know it and enjoy it. If you will run with that slicing up of the population, it's the third group, those who have the love of God in them and enjoy it who are the saints. And I hope that means all of us because, simply by our tuning in here this morning, we recognize (however timidly) that God is working in and through us. If a slogan helps, perhaps it should be 'Come on the Saints' whether you long to be shouting again in St Mary's Stadium or not.

Let's remember: while individually we may be nothing much, the Communion of saints is really something. Within this team if each of us is true to our gift, we shall be built up to mature humanity to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ – no less.

My fellow saints, God be with us this morning.
Good morning.

Prayers

Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us.

Blessed are the peacemakers. We pray for those who work for peace and justice our world. Those who face opposition, and challenges along the way. Those who stand up for the most marginalised in all places.

Blessed are the poor. We pray for those battling poverty in all manner of ways. Poverty of experience and opportunity. Poverty of the self esteem or confidence. Poverty of spiritual sustenance and the ability to keep going. Physical poverty which means food is not on the table, houses are not fit to live in and despair is not far at hand.

Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness. We pray for all struggling to make our world a better place, even in the midst of persecution.

May we be instruments of love, peace and grace, may we be striving for righteousness and justice, and may we be a channel of God's love, as many saints sought to be across the ages.

Amen

Prayer of thanks for Gifts

Let us have a moment to acknowledge again all that we have as individuals and as a church community, not what would be but what is. If you would like to give to the life and work of this church then you can send a cheque made payable to Swaythling Parish, or give online :
www.give.net/SwaythlingParish

Let us take a moment now to give thanks to God: We thank you Lord for all the gifts we have received, financial and in so many other ways. Help us to use them wisely to share your love in this place. **Amen**

Hymn: He who would valiant be

- 1 He who would valiant be
'gainst all disaster,
let him in constancy
follow the Master.
There's no discouragement
shall make him once relent
his first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.
- 2 Who so beset him round
with dismal stories,
do but themselves confound -
his strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
though he with giants fight;
he will make good his right
to be a pilgrim.
- 3 Since, Lord, Thou dost defend
us with Thy Spirit,
we know we at the end
shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
to be a pilgrim.

John Bunyan (1628-1688)

A Closing Prayer

God of our pilgrimage,
you have fed us with the bread of heaven.
Refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
to live and work to your praise and
glory. **Amen**

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for joining us today.

May the inspiration of the Saints, and the faith we have now sustain us and push us on towards radical discipleship and loving service.

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always.
Amen.

Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you in any way, please get in touch. peter.dockree@outlook.com 023 8055 4231 Songs reproduced under CCLI Licence No 159376. Streaming Licence No 101226. Scripture quotations from NRSVA version of the Bible, © 1989, 1995.