

LAIRG CHURCH OF SCOTLAND & ROGART (ST CALLANS) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCO20871 and SCO10035

Welcome

Once again, hello to you all as you come to share these thoughts, readings and prayers. Wherever you are, whether simply reading these words or listening to them via YouTube my prayer today is that you would know God's presence with you. If you are using this act of worship on Sunday 1st November then this is All Saints' Day. A saint is not someone special, but rather a holy person. So as we worship today remember that you are one of God's saints.

Opening Prayers

Here we are Lord, present to meet with you.

This day I open myself up to your Spirit again – come amongst us, Lord Jesus.

This day I say I am sorry for all I have done wrong – forgive me, Lord Jesus.

This day I know that I am forgiven for all the times I have fallen short of your glory – thank you for accepting me as I am, Lord Jesus.

This day I worship the Living God – praise to you, Lord Jesus.

Here we are Lord, come amongst us, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Hymn:167 – Colours of day

Colours of day dawn into the mind,
The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down to the city, into the street
and let's give the message to the people we
meet.

So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Open the door, let Jesus return.

*Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus, let his love grow.*

Go through the park. On into the town:
the sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again:
the people of darkness are needing a friend.

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
the darkness has come, the sun come to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
but Jesus is living, and his Spirit is near.

S McClellan, J Paculabo and K Ryecroft
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Prayers

Lord, come to us:

as once you came to Elijah in a cave on a mountain;

as once you came to Isaiah in the temple;

as once you came to travellers on the road to Emmaus and in the breaking of bread.

Lord, come to us:

as you come to the mother who cries out because her child has no food;

as you come to the prisoner tortured for standing up for the truth;

as you come to the Aids sufferer and the leper shunned by society.

Lord, come to us:

as you came to our mothers and fathers in the faith;

as you came to Columba, Andrew, Mother Julian and Mother Theresa;

as you came to those who served you well though they have no mention in the history books.

Lord, come to us and continue to come;

affirm our faith, comfort our sadness and disturb our complacency.

We never worship you alone, Lord God. Even when we are on our own, as perhaps many of you are today, remember we are still surrounded by your faithful people from the past, in the present and of the future. So with all your people of every age, we come to praise and adore you. Amen.

We say together or listen to the Lord's Prayer

Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Ephesians 1 : 1 – 2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:
² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflections on the readings

Today is marked in many Christian denominations as All Saints Day. It's perhaps not something that we tend to make a great deal of within the Church of Scotland but I thought today we could think a bit about who saints are and what, if anything they are today.

Some Christian traditions focus on remembering special Christians on All Saints Day or bringing to mind believers who have died and gone to be with the Lord. This day offers a fine opportunity to thank God for those whose lives have honoured him and made a difference to us. Yet, it's important to remember that the biblical sense of "saint" includes all of God's people, not just those who have excelled in discipleship. That was why I chose to read those first couple of verses from Ephesians. Paul addressed his letter to the saints, or God's Holy people, those faithful in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, saints are holy people, by definition.

But what does it mean to be a holy person, a saint? From a biblical perspective, something is holy when it is set apart for God and God's purposes. So, an animal to be sacrificed to the Lord is holy because it is designated for this special function. In Exodus 19, God set apart the Israelites as his own "treasured possession" (19:5). They would be a "holy nation" (19:6) through which God would make himself known to the world. In the New Testament, believers in Jesus Christ are referred to as "saints" or "holy people" because they have inherited Israel's divinely conferred status as people set apart by God for him and for his saving purposes.

If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are a saint. You are a holy person. This does not necessarily say anything about your worthiness to receive this title or your exemplary lifestyle, however. I wouldn't recommend that you go around putting "Saint" in front of your name. Rather, you are a saint because God has chosen you to belong to him and his people. He has set you apart so that you might participate in his redeeming work in the world.

And remember, you are not a solo saint. There is no such thing from a biblical perspective. Rather, as a saint, you have been joined to the family of all saints, including those who live around the world and those who have gone to be with the Lord. Therefore, on All Saints Day, it is a perfect time to remember that God has made you special for him and his purposes, and that he has joined you into the eternal, worldwide fellowship of all his saints. It's a good day to take seriously the fact that God wants to make himself known in this world through you as a member of the family of all saints.

Today's gospel reading comes from the "Sermon on the Mount." We heard the beatitudes, which teach us how Jesus wants us to live as His followers or in other words how saints should live. To be chosen by God and numbered as one of his saints means we are to live our lives contrary to the

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ways of this world. The beatitudes show us just that. The world says success is based on wealth, but Jesus says we are to be “poor in spirit.” Money itself is not bad, but “the love of money is the root of all evil.” Jesus calls us to be detached from wealth. Then again the world tells us that to seek pleasure. Just think of the popular phrase, “If it feels right, do it.” But instead, Jesus says, “Blessed are those who mourn.” The world tells us to seek power, but Jesus says be “meek.” The world says the honour and the approval of others is important, but Jesus says, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.” Simply put, the beatitudes are the “how to” of sainthood. Saints are “meek;” they are “pure of heart;” saints are “merciful” and “peacemakers;” they “hunger and thirst for righteousness.” God’s children are even willing to be persecuted and insulted for the sake of Christ. Therefore, if you want to be a saint, seek these things. Strive to align yourself with the beatitudes and, if you find it difficult, just remember, “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.” In other words, it’s all worth it in the end. AMEN

Prayers of intercession

On this All Saints Day, our prayers of intercession focus on the saints, which as we’ve just heard might just include all of us...

Glory to you, O Lord, from the whole company of heaven, from the saints in glory, from your people on earth.

Father, we give you thanks that in the darkness of this world your saints shine.

May we, with them, have a share in your everlasting kingdom; through Christ our Lord.

We give you praise for holy men and women who have been an inspiration to us, for those who have set us an example to follow.

May your church be inspired by their lives, seek to keep before it their dedication, and follow after their vision.

We pray for all who are seeking to fulfil their vocation, for all who seek to dedicate quietly themselves to you and your glory.

Lord of the saints, strengthen our faith.

Blessed are you, Lord our God. You have called us to a world full of good things.

We thank you for all who have set out to improve our world.

We pray for all who work in conservation, for those who care for others, for all who have sacrificed themselves in the service of others, for those who seek to live simply that others may simply live.

Lord of the saints, strengthen our faith.

We give you thanks for those who taught us the faith, for those who gave generously and sacrificially for us, for all who have led us in the ways of goodness and truth.

We pray that our homes and our work may be places of holiness, that we may be an example to others.

Lord of the saints, strengthen our faith.

We give thanks today for all your saints, and we join our praises with theirs.

Lord of the saints, strengthen our faith. Amen

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Hymn: Will you come and follow me?

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,

and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule
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Blessing

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 and Saviour. Amen