



*For all the saints who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! LSB 677:1*

November 1 is The Feast of All Saints' in the church year, one of the great feasts that commemorates salvation won through Christ. Most congregations transfer this service to the first Sunday in November so that all can participate in the celebration of eternal life for the saints gone before. All Saints Day was first celebrated in the Western Church as All Martyrs' Day in the spring of the year. More people have been martyred for the name of Christ than there are the number of days in the year, so one day a year was chosen as a commemoration. Later the day was expanded to include not only martyrs, but all the saints of God who have gone to life everlasting.

The great celebration of this Feast in the church year is the unity of the Church Triumphant (those saints in life eternal) with the Church Militant (the present and future Church that struggles under its cross here on earth). Together, both the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant make up the "Communion of Saints," one fellowship together in Christ our Savior. They are the "great cloud of witnesses" spoken of in Hebrews 12:1 who have been made God's own by the "founder and perfecter of our faith," (Heb. 12:2) Jesus Christ. What unites them has come from the Lord, that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of The Lamb (Revelation 7:14b). Their sins are forgiven through the work of redemption accomplished by Christ on the cross and in His resurrection.

A tear might come to our eye as we remember the saints gone before, our loved ones who have died in the faith who belong to the Church Triumphant. Of course, they would tell us not to cry for they know no more pain and suffering, heartache or tribulation. They behold their Savior by the Grace of God. Of those who number among the saints some were wealthy, some poor, some speaking one language or another. While their earthly background is as diverse as the peoples of this earth, they are all unified in their attention focused toward The Lamb upon His throne, their Lord Jesus Christ in His victory over sin, death and the devil forever.

You belong to that number as well through your Baptism in which the blessings of the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that is forgiveness, life and salvation earned by Christ, are made your own and you are made God's own child, a member of His kingdom, His Church. You share in the blessings of Christ and His cross by God's grace and share in the same blessings given to those saints who have gone before. You share in the blessings they receive while focusing on what they are focused upon: Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior, the God/Man, who gave His life as a ransom for many, for the forgiveness of sins that they and you would become and remain God's children.

One of the great blessings of living in our nation today is the blessing of freedom of religion in which we can give thanks to the Lord for His continual mercy given to us through Christ. We begin the month of November celebrating the faith of the saints given by God's grace, and praising God that they now enjoy the eternal blessings from Christ and His cross. Then, as November draws to a close, we celebrate Thanksgiving and praise God from whom all blessings flow and remember that all of those blessings come to us through Christ's death and resurrection. We give thanks for the saints who have gone before for their faith reminds us that our faith is not in vain, but looks to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who endured the cross for us that we would become the righteousness of God. Yet, it is not just on November 1 and then November 22 (Thanksgiving Day this year) that we give thanks to God for His blessings in Christ, but every day of the month, indeed every day of the year "for His mercies are new" (Lamentations 3:22b) to us every morning as the sacred writer makes clear. Therefore, as we continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ in His Church Militant, we praise Him for those blessed opportunities to demonstrate God's love in Christ to those who come into our presence and toward each other as we are unified in Christ who brings us together by His suffering, death and resurrection.

*By grace! None dare lay claim to merit;  
Our works and conduct have no worth.  
God in His love sent our Redeemer,  
Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;  
His death did for our sins atone,  
And we are saved by grace alone.*

LSB 566:2

In Christ, Pastor