

All Saints

- The celebration of All Saints (& All Souls) brings us face to face with the mystery of death & challenges our belief in the life beyond this life.
- We know intellectually that we must die, yet we do not perceive death as the goal of our existence, we hope to somehow avoid it or at least think about it.
- We yearn for immortality, but not just living any existence, we yearn for an inner peace & fulfillment & we do various things to try to grasp onto fulfilling life eternal.
- And those who cannot continue to live this life, never want death & annihilation, but cannot find a way to a meaningful & life-giving existence.
- We also have true glimpses of heaven.
- The brief joys we experience are not insignificant.
- Our unquenchable longing is not the cruel joke of a haphazard universe or the practical joke of a cruel Creator.
- We feel a deep loneliness & incompleteness because we are meant for a lasting communion & something more than what the finitude & limitations that this life impose upon us.
- That is precisely what we celebrate today & tomorrow, with all Souls.
- We remember today the promises of a loving God who seeks our completion & the fulfillment of all created order & we acknowledge our union with those who have already died & whom the Church is assured exist in this fulfillment in another dimension of reality.
- We pray with an assurance of hope in a God who intends lasting communion with us & we pray that this vision influences the way we live now.
- The Feast of All Saints extends to all the holy women & men, known & unknown, who have lived in communion with Jesus & who now enjoy what we have traditionally referred to as the Beatific Vision in heaven.
- Towards the end of the Creed which we will pray together shortly we proclaim our faith in 'the communion of saints'.
- We belong to the family of Jesus & we belong to each other, to those who have died & have attained to the perfection of love in eternal communion with God & to all those still living here on earth & who are, as the Council says, still 'tending to the perfection of love'.
- The saints are enjoying the fullness of love for which we are all created.
- *Our temptation is to avoid things & to live in distraction.*
- The saints remind us to keep seeking love until our whole being is drawn into the fire of God's love.
- On the feast of All Saints the church invites us & challenges us to walk the walk, not just to talk the talk, of the saints.

- In the Creed we also state our firm belief in the resurrection of the dead & the existence of heaven.
- To believe in heaven is to refuse to accept the belief that all of us are but a small parenthesis between 2 immense voids.
- Trusting in Jesus, we can foresee, believe & hope in a God guiding us towards a final fulfillment, the yearning for life, justice & peace built into creation & in the very heart of humanity.
- To believe in heaven is to rebel against the idea that the vast majority of people who have known only misery hunger, humiliation & exclusion from all that offers a dignified life will be consigned to an oblivion for all eternity.
- It is to believe in a life without poverty & suffering where there will be no more poverty & suffering.
- To believe in heaven is to refuse to accept that God remains hidden & whose face we can never see & whose tenderness & loving embrace we can never feel.
- To believe in heaven reinforces efforts to bring about a better & more just world.
- To believe in heaven means that today we can reach out to people who have lost their health, the sick, lonely & all those who are physically & mentally challenged & just generally tired of the struggle to live & extend to them what we foresee in the future fulfillment now.
- The Beatitudes propose to us a way of life, inviting us to identify with the poor, those who mourn, the meek, & those who hunger & thirst after justice.
- They challenge us to be compassionate people, to be women & men who are pure in heart, & to become the peacemakers in our dealings with one another, in our families & in the society at large, even when this approach to things exposes us to ridicule & persecution.
- None of the saints we celebrate today had it as their aim in life to amass wealth, to acquire power or to gain popularity, but they strived to be true to the meaning & purposefulness of the lives they had in relationship with God.
- They allowed themselves to be purified by love & we too are called to 'tend toward the perfection of love'.
- Loving will purify us till we, too, are numbered among the saints whose lives we commemorate today.
- In celebrating this feast & believing in heaven means that we commit ourselves to working with God now to progress together towards the completion of his creative plan by putting into place all the characteristics of our future homeland in the so many ways that we tread this earth.