

All Saints' Sunday
Year B

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 24

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

The lessons for this All Saints' Sunday deal with resurrection, the hope we as Christians hold dear. But, I would like us to reflect on what it means to be a saint and how some saints have had an influence on each of us. Who are the saints who have impacted our lives? I ask each of you, right now, to focus on one or two saints of old who may have influenced your understanding of the faith. It may be someone who wrote a book in the Bible, or perhaps someone you have read about who you were drawn to. What do these people have in common? Were they great writers? Great mystics? Perhaps it is one of the close followers of Jesus - male or female. Why is this saint important to you?

One of my favorite hymns for All Saints' Day, which we sang today for the processional, is Hymn 287 - "For all the saints, who from their labors rest." Not only does this evoke in me the memory of those great saints we read about in Scripture, but also those who might have a more personal impact on us - a parent or grandparent, a minister or teacher. These people may, or may not, appear on our liturgical calendars, but are important for how they influenced us. I think, first of all, of my father. He had a greater impact on me than I ever realized as I was growing up. As you think about these saints, how do they compare with those we have already considered? They may not have walked with Jesus physically during His earthly ministry, but they surely walked with Jesus each day of their lives.

Another of my favorite hymns for All Saints' Day, which we are not singing today, is Hymn 293 - "I sing a song of the saints of God." We don't have to look back centuries to find saints. We don't even need to go to cemeteries to find them. As this hymn states, they surround us in the world today. Again, I would like you to think about someone who is living today who you might consider a saint. It might be an author whose books are especially meaningful. It might be a minister or teacher, or the person who works the checkout at the store who is kind and helpful to everyone who comes through their line. If you need prompts of who to consider, turn in your hymnal to 293 and read the list - doctors, queens, shepherdesses, soldiers, priests, people you meet in daily life.

I would like you each to take a few minutes to remember, aloud or in your heart, those saints who have impacted your life.

Let us stand together and pray for these saints, living and dead, who have been our guiding lights. BCP 250, third prayer.