

## CELEBRATING GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE

If we have died with Him we shall also live with Him;  
if we persevere we shall also reign with Him.  
But if we deny Him He will deny us.  
If we are unfaithful He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

2 TIMOTHY 2: 11-13

### Presence of God

We pause and in silence remember that the Lord our God is continually with us and invites us to follow the Lord Jesus.

Holy is God, holy and mighty, holy and living forever!

### Prayer

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God,  
we do well always and everywhere to give You thanks.  
For You are glorified in the assembly of Your saints,  
for in crowning their merits, You crown the gifts You have given them.  
In their lives on earth, You give us an example;  
In our communion with them, You give us their friendship;  
In their prayer for the Church, You give us strength and protection.  
This great company of witnesses spurs us on to victory,  
to share their prize of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Hymn: For All The Saints

For all the saints, who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress and their  
Might;  
Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well fought  
fight;  
Thou, in the darkness drear, their One True  
Light.  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;  
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of glory passes on His way.  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's  
farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in the  
countless host,  
And singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost:  
Alleluia, Alleluia!



## **Prayer Before The Scripture Readings**

Open your ears, O Christian people,  
open your ears and hear the Good News.  
Open your hearts, O Christian people.  
Open your hearts and receive the Good News.

### **Revelation 7: 2-4; 9-14**

I, John, saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads." And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

### **MATTHEW 5: 3-10**

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when men 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.

### **Reflection; Saint Bernard of Clairvaux**

Why should our praise and glorification, or even the celebration of this feast day mean anything to the saints? What do they care about earthly honors when their heavenly Father honors them by fulfilling the faithful promise of the Son? What does our commendation mean to them? The saints have no need of honor from us; neither does our devotion add the slightest thing to what is theirs. Clearly, if we venerate their memory, it serves us, not them. But I tell you, when I think of them, I feel myself inflamed by a tremendous yearning.

Calling the saints to mind inspires, or rather arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company, so desirable in itself. We long to share in the citizenship of heaven, to dwell with the spirits of the blessed, to join the assembly of patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the council of apostles, the great host of martyrs, the noble company of confessors and the choir of virgins. In short, we long to be united in happiness with all the saints. But our dispositions change. The Church of all the first followers of Christ awaits us, but we do nothing about it. The saints want us to be with them, and we are indifferent. The souls of the just await us, and we ignore them.

Come, brothers and sisters, let us at length spur ourselves on. We must rise again with Christ, we must seek the world which is above and set our mind on the things of heaven. Let us long for those who are longing for us, hasten to those who are waiting for us, and ask those who look for our coming to intercede for us. We should not only want to be with the saints, we should also hope to possess their happiness. While we desire to be in their company, we must also earnestly seek to share in their glory. Do not imagine that there is anything harmful in such an ambition as this; there is no danger in setting our hearts on such glory.

When we commemorate the saints we are inflamed with another yearning: that Christ our life may also appear to us as He appeared to them and that we may one day share in His glory. Until then we see Him, not as He is, but as He became for our sake. He is our head, crowned, not with glory, but with the thorns of our sins. As members of that head, crowned with thorns, we should be ashamed to live in luxury; His purple robes are a mockery rather than an honor. When Christ comes again, His death shall no longer be proclaimed, and we shall know that we also have died, and that our life is hidden with Him. The glorious head of the Church will appear and His glorified members will shine in splendor with Him, when He forms this lowly body anew into such glory as belongs to Himself, its head.

Therefore, we should aim at attaining this glory with a wholehearted and prudent desire. That we may rightly hope and strive for such blessedness, we must above all seek the prayers of the saints. Thus, what is beyond our own powers to obtain will be granted through their intercession.

### **A Prayer**

How shining and splendid are Your gifts, O Lord  
which You give us for our eternal well-being  
Your glory shines radiantly in Your saints, O God  
In the honor and noble victory of the martyrs.  
The white-robed company follow You,  
bright with their abundant faith;  
They scorned the wicked words of those with this world's power.  
For You they sustained fierce beatings, chains, and torments,  
they were drained by cruel punishments.  
They bore their holy witness to You  
Who were grounded deep within their hearts;  
they were sustained by patience and constancy.  
Endowed with Your everlasting grace,  
may we rejoice forever

with the martyrs in our bright fatherland.  
O Christ, in Your goodness,  
grant to us the gracious heavenly realms of eternal life.  
Unknown author, 10th century

### **Prayers of Intercession**

United in the company of all the faithful  
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,  
let us offer our prayers to God, the Source of all life and holiness

Merciful Lord,  
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit  
**that we may live as a royal priesthood  
and a holy nation to the praise of Christ Jesus our Savior.**

Bless *N* our bishop, and all ministers of Your Church,  
**that by faithful proclamation of Your Word we may be  
built  
on the foundation of the apostles and prophets**

Empower us by the gift of your Holy and Life-giving Spirit  
**that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ.**

Give to the world and its peoples the peace that comes from  
above,  
**that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.**

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love  
in the service of the poor and needy;  
**all those who minister to the sick and dying;  
and all who bring light to those in darkness.**

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin  
or disfigured by pain,  
**that raised from death to life in Christ, their sorrow  
may be turned to eternal joy.**

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us  
who have been well-pleasing to You from eternity;  
**preserve in Your faith Your servants on earth,  
guide us to Your kingdom,  
and grant us Your peace at all times.**

Hasten the day when many will come  
from east and west, from north and south,  
**and sit at table in Your kingdom.**

We give You thanks for the whole company of Your saints in glory,  
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;  
**by Your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in Your love.  
Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power to You**





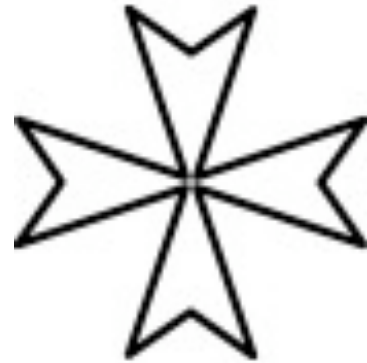
That the Lord Jesus will accompany each of us on our journey to Him, we pray the prayer that He taught us: **Our Father...**

**Hymn: Sing A New Song Unto the Lord**

Sing a new song unto the Lord.  
Let your song be sung from mountains high.  
Sing a new song unto the Lord singing alleluia.

Yahweh's people dance for joy.  
Oh come before the Lord.  
And play for Him on glad tambourines,  
And let your trumpet sound.

Rise oh children from your sleep.  
Your Savior now has come.  
He has turned your sorrow to joy,  
And filled your soul with song.



**The Blessing**

May God,  
Who kindled the fire of His love in the hearts of the saints,  
pour upon us the riches of His grace.

**Amen.**

May He give us joy in their fellowship  
and a share in their praises.

**Amen.**

May He strengthen us to follow them in the way of holiness  
and to come to the full radiance of glory.

**Amen.**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O ye Angels and Archangels,  
Thrones and Dominions,  
Principalities and Powers,  
Virtues of heaven,  
Cherubim and Seraphim,  
ye Patriarchs and Prophets,  
holy Doctors of the Law,  
Apostles,  
all Martyrs of Christ,  
holy Confessors,  
Virgins of the Lord,  
Hermits and all Saints:  
Intercede for us.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!