

Sunday 5th November 2023 – All stage worship for All Saints Sunday

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Introduction – All Saints Day was Wednesday and on the first Sunday after that we can take time to think about the Saints.

What is a saint?

A saint is someone who has died and been officially recognized and honoured by the Christian church because his or her life was a perfect example of the way Christians should live.

If you refer to a living person as a saint, you mean that they are extremely kind, patient, and unselfish.

In the bible to be a saint is to be a person set aside for God's purpose and especially someone who has become a follower of Jesus, so the gospel writers are referred to as Saints, as is Paul who started the early churches and wrote lots of letters.

Game – Who am I – can you recognise these saints? (Answers at the end)

A

- I lived the 500s and I was the only one of the Patron Saints in the UK to be born in the UK.
- A chapel marks the spot where I was born. And is surrounded by a stone circle.
- I was a preacher and travelled widely across the Celtic lands. I founded monasteries in many places I visited.
- I was vegetarian and only ate once a day, and only drank water. I was known as a healer.
- The last words he is reported as saying were, 'Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do', and was made a saint in 1120.

B

- I was probably born in France near Boulogne in the late 300s.
- I was kidnapped and taken to Ireland where I was held as a slave for six years.
- When I escaped I went back to France where I entered a monastery and trained for twelve years.
- I later became a missionary, and as a bishop returned to Ireland to spread the gospel.
- I died on the 17th March

C

- I was a high ranking officer in the Roman Army in Palestine in the 300s
- I am the Patron Saint of 13 countries most of which I never visited.
- There are many stories about me but most of them are not true.
- I rebelled against the Emperor when he tried to rid the army of Christianity and was held captive and tortured for many years.
- I was beheaded on the 23rd April
- My death is celebrated around the world in many different ways – a horse race in the streets, and Sicily has a three day festival in May, Barcelona, capital of Catalonia, has a national holiday celebrates by lovers exchanging gifts of red roses and books. in Albania bonfires are lit, whilst Bulgarians spit roast entire sheep

D

- I was born in Galilee between 5 and 10 AD, and had a brother called Simon. I was a fisherman until I met Jesus
- Later I became a missionary and travelled to Greece, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia
- I was killed in Greece in 60AD.
- I am a patron saint of at least 8 countries as well as the patron saint of fishermen, fishmongers and rope-makers, textile workers, singers, miners, pregnant women, butchers, and farm workers!
- In the UK I am the Patron Saint of the land where some of my bones were taken in 597, and were a cloud in the shape of a appeared in the blue sky before a battle against the Angles.

Reflection 1

Have you heard of St Francis? He is the patron saint of Italy but also of animals and ecology. He was born in Italy into a very wealthy family and when he was born his father was away and his mother called him Giovanni, after John the Baptist. When his father returned he had his name changed to Francois in honour of his French mother and his father's love of France.

He was very spoilt and wanted for nothing and had little care for others. He dreamed of being a knight and made his own armour, then went to fight but he was captured and held for ransom. On his return home he restarted his rich living and often got into trouble with friends.

Eventually, he decided to try the army again but before he reached the battle he had a vision in which he felt called to return home. His friends made fun of him and he began to work for his father and spend more time alone in prayer. One day he had another vision to restore the church. He thought this meant his local church and so he sold some of his father's goods without asking to pay for materials. His father was angry and reported him as a thief to the Bishop, the Bishop told him he must repay his father but that God would give him everything he needed. Francois, was angry and took off all his clothes and said his father could have those as well. He left home and began to travel through the land preaching about people, animals and nature, and relying on God for everything, the Bishop had given him basic clothes. He became known for talking with animals and there are lots of stories about his relationship with animals.

Later he formed a religious order called the Franciscans which is still important to many today. Here is a story from the Order.

Story – The wolf in the woods [Read a version here](#)

We also have a prayer that Francis wrote and we often sing this prayer -

Make me a channel of your peace [Listen here](#)

Reading Matthew 5:1-12 ([New Living Translation](#))

Reflection 2

Those verses from Matthew remind us that everyone is a part of the Kingdom and the Kingdom is for everyone. They also remind us that life is sometimes difficult but we should not give up hope, God is with us in the difficulties. In many ways they remind us of the lives of some of the Saints who encountered real challenges but remained faithful to God. St Francis gave up everything and lived a very simple life. So far we have only spoken about men but there are women saints also and I want to mention two very special saints.

Hildegard of Bingen, also known as St. Hildegard was an enormously influential and spiritual woman, who paved the way for other women to succeed in a number of fields from theology to music.

Hildegard was a Benedictine abbess, writer, poet, and composer who lived in 12th-century Germany. She had numerous prophetic and mystical visions during her life and is said to have been a miracle worker.

Hildegard is one of the few prominent women in medieval church history. In fact, she is one of only four women who were named a doctor of the church, meaning that her writings have special authority in Roman Catholicism. She is considered by many to be a patron saint of musicians and writers.

Later we will listen to a piece of her amazing music.

One of the latest saints is St Theresa of Calcutta, remembered as Mother Theresa. She was not originally called Theresa but Agnes and she was born in what is now the Republic of Macedonia, in 1910. She dreamed of becoming a missionary to India where she saw real hardship and need, and at 18 she joined the Sisters of Loretta. Before she could go to India she had to learn to speak English and she spent a year in Ireland to learn English. In 1937 she became a nun and took the name Theresa after her hero St Theresa of Avila.

In 1979 Mother Theresa was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. Instead of the usual banquet she asked that the money that would have been spent be donated to the poor in India.

Mother Theresa once said there were no such things as problems, only opportunities and when stranded at an airport for four hours once, took the opportunity to buy a book and read it. Other sayings were

- Peace begins with a smile
- If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong together.

Mother Theresa died in 1999 and was declared a Saint in 2016

“Do it Anyway” Poem-Prayer

This poem was found on a wall inside Mother Teresa’s home in Calcutta -
People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centred.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. **Succeed anyway.**

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. **Be happy anyway.**

The good you do today will often be forgotten. **Do good anyway.**

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. **Give your best anyway.**

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Our next hymn is based on the words of St Theresa’s hero St Theresa of Avila and speaks of the life of a Saint and we are all saints when we follow Jesus.

Nothing distress you, nothing a fright you ([see words and hear music here](#))

St Theresa – ‘Prayer is not asking, prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God and listening to his voice in the depths of your heart.’

Take a moment to put yourself in the hands of God and listen to some music by Hildegard of Bingen

[Listen to Hildegard of Bingen music](#)

Who am I – A. St David, B. St Patrick, C. St George, D. St Andrew