

All Saints: Beacon of Life
Revelation 7:9-17

Liturgy for All Saints

In his vision, apostle John saw, “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.” They were saints who had finished their journey in this world and now rest under the shelter of risen the Christ. We all know that those who have gone before us are now standing among them.

Today is All Saints Sunday. We remember all saints and celebrate their lives. Since last All Saints day, Judy Anderson, our beloved friend, has joined this heavenly choir. Domenic A. Ruscio, Jr., a beloved son of Linda Rusio, is now resting under God’s tent. Some of your family members and friends may have finished their journey and rest in heaven.

So, on this Sunday, we remember their lives and celebrate the gifts and thanksgiving they brought into our lives. In our prayers, we ask that God grant them eternal rest and that we will be kept in communion with all the saints until we’re reunited with them around the heavenly throne of God. We now speak their names. Please stand as we name the saints. After lighting a candle, we will have a brief moment of silent prayer.

Domenic Ruscio Jr.

Judy Anderson,

Please say the names of all saints in your lives as we light the third candle.

Please remember and pray for all who passed away by Covid-19

Remember and pray for ancestors of faith who live and die in faith

A PRAYER MEDITATION FOR ALL SAINTS DAY

We give you thanks, O God, for all the saints

who have lived and died in faith and now rest in you.

On this All Saints Day, we remember that we are not alone!

We gather with the saints, who live in the presence of God,
singing praises to the God of our salvation.

We give you thanks, o God, for them whose lives were true blessing for our lives.

They left their mark on the earth for you, for us, for our children to come.

Thank you, God, for the tremendous sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.

Bless the memories of your saints, God.

May we learn how to walk wisely from their examples of faith, dedication, worship, and love.

Strengthen us to follow their beacons until we meet at your heavenly banquet.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Please be seated.

Sermon

I believe all of us have at least one saint who have impacted our life of faith. Who are all saints for you? For me, my father is a saint who has lived and died in faith. A few month ago, I received a short memoir about my father. One of my home church members is a writer and she wanted to include a memoir about my father in her new book. In her writing, she describes my father as “a little bird.” She wrote, “he was a little bird. He wasn’t a raptor with sharp claws. He

was not a cunning cuckoo who lays eggs in other's nests. He hoped to be a little bird who is content with whatever he has and shares it with others." At the end of her writing, she wrote, "Little bird! But bigger than any bird! You have gone, but the footprints you left in my heart will never be erased." This is my rough translation.

I felt that she really captured my father well. My father showed me what it means to be a Christian and especially, a pastor. His footprint is in my heart and still guides my way whenever I feel lost.

I believe all of you have your saints who live in faith and shape who you are. Though their time in this world has ended, we never lose communion with them. As Apostle Paul said, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39). Even death cannot separate us from the love of Christ. It means, though death separates us from those in the glory of heaven, in the love of Christ, we are able to have communion with all saints who are still living and who rest in heaven. The faith in a living communion between the living and the blessed dead is not like summoning a spirit that you might see in some Halloween movies. We communicate with the saints through giving thanks to God for them; accepting our ancestors' faith as our own; remembering their lives and witness; and joining them in the praise of God in our worship service.

When I first came to the church, Joan White brought me a gift. [ppt] It was a light house that shines a light at night. As I prepared for today's sermon, the image of the light house helped me understand the meaning of the communion of saints. Imagine that we are on a boat at night and we don't know where to go. All saints who are in heaven are like light houses for us. There is a certain distance between us and them but we are still connected with one another through the light. The saints cannot directly intervene our lives and solve our problems, but their life-testimony and witness still shine as a beacon and help us to find the right direction to go even in a deep night. Remember saints in your lives who have lived and died in faith and who still live in Christ and shine in us! If you feel you are lost in life, see and follow the warm light of those who have gone before us and they will lead you to the true light, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Be a Beacon for Others!

Of course, we will all join this great multitude of saints one day. It means we need to be a beacon for the next generations. Think of "What spiritual legacy you want to leave behind?" To leave a legacy, you don't have to be a charismatic superhero. You don't need an advanced degree. You just need to be a faithful Christian who loves Jesus Christ and share the light God has implanted in you with people around you.

[ppt] I bet everyone has read this article about Tina Bishop.¹ The title is "40 years of baking a Christmas tradition." I didn't have an opportunity to meet Tina but I can tell that I have felt many legacies Tina left behind at Asbury UMC. Her deep faith, her gentle smile and of course, her famous bread! We will miss the fragrant aroma of her Swedish coffee bread this year. But I believe her legacy continue through Barbara Bishop and hopefully, one day through Danika. I know that many of you are handing over your spiritual legacy to your children. Of course, it's not an easy task. But my friends, don't give up. Pray for your children and invite them to Christ. Share the joy you experience in Christ through your words and deeds. Through your love, your persistent love for Christ and your children and family, your light will shine generation to generation. Amen.

¹ <https://warwickonline.com/stories/40-years-of-baking-a-christmas-tradition.106994>