

All Saints (November 2, 2014)

“For All the Saints” (*Lutheran Service Book*, #677)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

(Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV)

“SAINTS.” The word brings to mind special people of God from centuries past commemorated by the Church to strengthen our faith. Such commemorations focus on what God accomplished in these men and women through His Holy Spirit, consoling us with examples of God’s grace and godly living. Included in the official list of commemorations are several musicians in the Church, such as Johann Walter, Johann Sebastian Bach, Bernard of Clairvaux, Philipp Nicolai, and Paul Gerhardt.

Yet we might also recall other saints in our lives: the mother who first taught us about Jesus’ love, the father who cared for us through his humble vocation, the teacher who listened to us in a time of need, the pastor who absolved us in obedience to Christ. The hymn of the day for All Saints’ Sunday encompasses *all* saints, whether publicly commemorated or not, confessing that “all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.”

Was their life without trouble or conflict? Were they tossed about as a ship without an anchor? Did they wander in the darkness? The answer is a resounding, NO! Their rock, their fortress, their might was found in none other than Jesus Christ, their Lord: “Thou, Lord, their captain, in the well fought fight!”

When we falter and there seems to be no hope, we receive encouragement from remembering the lives of these saints. In their example, and in God’s grace shown to them, we can yet hear in the distance the triumph song of both saints and angels, singing to the Lamb who sits on the throne in glory— “and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong!”

In God’s time, all faithful warriors will receive the “calm of paradise the blest.” This alone would be enough to sustain us, yet God gives us even more: “But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day; the saints triumphant rise in bright array, the King of glory passes on His way.” Now, not only are we spectators, but we will be included in the “countless host, singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost!”

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Irene Beethe

Kantor, Zion Lutheran Church
Wausau, Wisconsin



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

2 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!

3 Oh, may Thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold,
Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old
And win with them the victor's crown of gold!
Alleluia! Alleluia!

4 Oh, blest communion, fellowship divine,
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

5 And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
Steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
And hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

6 The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon, to faithful warriors cometh rest.
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

7 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!

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

Text: William W. How, 1823-97

Tune: SINE NOMINE Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958

(Both text and tune are in the public domain.)

[This devotion was prepared for the website of the Center for Church Music and may be downloaded and copied for local use.]