All Saints 2026

[Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; Psalm 24; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12a]

As we celebrate this Solemnity of All Saints, we remember all those who have been officially recognised as Saints by the Church and also all of the less well-known saints, those we may have known; people who have lived out their faith quietly and who are counted among the saints of heaven. Our scripture readings today ask us to look at both. Some of these lesser-known saints may well have passed on the faith to us, and we remember that *we are all called to be saints*. St Paul in his letters often addressed the baptised as 'saints', indicating the role which we should all aspire to.

In the Beatitudes which we hear in today's Gospel, we are given 9 categories of people whom Jesus called Blessed. I'd like to look at each of them and suggest a saint who may personify this role.

Firstly, Jesus promises the kingdom of heaven to those who are '**poor in spirit'**, but what does this mean? We all have an appreciation of what poor can mean; a poor person will have little time to think about anything else apart from where their next meal will come from, or where they will get the means to pay for the next bill which comes in. To be poor in spirit could mean someone who has adopted poverty to be closer to God Spiritually, or someone who recognises that they need God more than the trappings of wealth or consumerism. One notable example of this is **St Francis of Assisi**, who sold all he had to help the poor, even finding himself disinherited publicly by his wealthy father.

St Elizabeth Ann Seton exemplifies the next Beatitude, '**Blessed are those who mourn**'. St Elizabeth lost her husband and two daughters but turned her grief into a movement; which became the *Sisters of Charity of St Joseph's*, who sought out the poor, widows and orphans and ministered to them. Eventually the movement she started spread throughout the United States of America and beyond. She was the first native born American to be Canonised.

Jesus' next promise was that the '**meek shall inherit the earth'**, **St Francis De Sales** was known as a gentle saint, however he had to moderate his natural behaviour to achieve this.

Pope Pius XI wrote in his document *Rerum Omnium Perturbationem* - "*One would err, however, if he imagined that such a character as St. Francis de Sales possessed was a gift of nature, bestowed on him by the grace of God "with the blessing of meekness." On the contrary, Francis naturally was hot-tempered and easily aroused to anger. Since he had vowed to take as his model Jesus Who has said, "Learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart" (Mt. 11:29) so, by means of constant watchfulness over himself and of violence to his own will, he succeeded in learning how to curb and to control to such an extent the promptings of nature that he became a living likeness of the God of Peace and Meekness."*[1] Something which we could all aspire to, no doubt.

[1] Battling for Meekness with St. Francis de Sales - Catholic Exchange

A saint whom I admired when I was a child was **St Damien**. He ministered to lepers on a leper colony giving up his own life fighting for justice for these men, women and children who had been discarded by society, for me this exemplifies the fourth beatitude of '**hunger and thirst for righteousness**'.

When I think of a saint who was **merciful**, I think of **St Teresa of Calcutta**, who ministered to the weakest in society in countries which were particularly poor. She encouraged us all to find *our own Calcutta* and urged us to treat every individual as we would treat Jesus. Her encouragement for us to put the corporal works of mercy into action continue today, it is important for us to put our faith into action; otherwise, what we profess as our faith each week is just a set of empty words.

Next Jesus promised that '**the pure in** heart' shall see God. **St Augustine** taught that the pure heart is one freed from disordered attachments that prevent loving God above all things.[2] The greatest examples of this are surely found in the Holy Family of **Joseph, Mary and Jesus**.

We now turn to the '**peacemakers'**, for they shall be called sons of God. For me, the pope I grew up with **St John Paul II**, is a great role model for this. He is credited with being influential in the collapse of Communism, and he also brought together people of all faiths and religions to pray together for peace 40 years ago, at Assisi. Surely his efforts for world peace will make him be known as a son of God.

When I think of the next Beatitude of those who are '**persecuted for righteousness'** sake, I look towards **Oscar Romero**, a carpenter, who became an Archbishop and who spoke out against the corruption and injustice of a government who were torturing and killing their own people. For speaking up for his flock, this kindly shepherd, lost his life.

For the final Beatitude of being '**reviled and persecuted'** and other atrocities and for staying true to the Faith, there are many examples who were martyred during the Reformation in these Islands. The one who stands out for me most is **St John Ogilvie**; he was a Jesuit priest who was martyred for exercising his Ministry in Glasgow in 1615 and Canonised when I was a boy. At his execution he threw his Rosary beads to one of his accusers; who is said to have *converted* later in life.

All of these saints are inspirational to us and to the many unknown saints who have the Beatitudes as a road map on the journey to sainthood. They listened carefully to the words of Jesus; who after all is 'The Word made Flesh'; and they obeyed those words. Their rewards are listed in the Beatitudes. For us, we must strive to live out those words and try harder each day to be more saintly in what we do and what we say.

Further Reading

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

---

[2] "Blessed Are the Pure in Heart": The Forgotten Secret to Seeing God in a World of Impurity, Noise, and Confusion - Catholicus.eu English

November 1: The Solemnity of All Saints

> CCC 61, 946-962, 1090, 1137-1139, 1370: the Church, a communion of saints
> CCC 956, 2683: the intercession of the saints
> CCC 828, 867, 1173, 2030, 2683-2684: the saints, examples of holiness[3]

What Does It Mean to Be Poor in Spirit? | Catholic Answers Magazine

The Life of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Battling for Meekness with St. Francis de Sales - Catholic Exchange

3 Saints Who Confronted Injustice Head-On - Busted Halo

Saintly Examples of Mercy in Motion – EWTN Great Britain

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart": The Forgotten Secret to Seeing God in a World of Impurity, Noise, and Confusion - Catholicus.eu English

5 Saints Who Advocated For Peace - Catholic-Link

St. Oscar Romero, Martyr - Information on the Saint of the Day - Vatican News

Saint John Ogilvie - The Society of Jesus

Please accompany in your prayers

- All those who are sick, either at home or in hospital, especially those who have very few or no visitors.
- Those who have died and those who grieve for them.
- The success of the Pastoral Area Mission Plan.
- The continued success of the Alpha courses taking place in our Pastoral Area.
- The continued success of the Sycamore Programme taking place in Tadley on Tuesday evenings
- The continued success of the Christians Against Poverty [CAP] money coaching sessions, which concludes next Thursday in St Bede's Church Hall.

Deacon Tony,

31st October 2026

[3] Homiletic Directory, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments