

The All Saints Sunday readings for Sunday, Nov. 1, 2026:

First Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

Psalm: Psalm 34:1-10, 22

Second Reading: 1 John 3:1-3

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

This Sunday we celebrate All Saints Day. Most churches focus on loved ones of the congregation who have died; some churches give special emphasis to members who have died since the last All Saints Day. Some churches will be thinking about the larger collection of saints.

The Gospel reading for today at first seems jarringly out of place. Why are we back to the Sermon on the Mount? But after reading it, we see the connections. These are the behaviors of those whom we traditionally consider saints, people like Mother Theresa. They should be the behaviors of those of us still on earth who consider ourselves to be part of that saintly pantheon.

When we read Gospels like these, many of us might think that we do these things as our admission ticket for Heaven. But some of the more interesting books of theology that I've read lately remind us that Christ didn't come to take us to Heaven. In fact, the concept of Heaven with all our loved ones waiting for us there is relatively new to Christian thought. Christ came to announce that God's plan for redeeming the world had begun. That plan involves our pre-death world, which is not just a place where we wait around until it's our turn to go to Heaven. No, this world is the one that God wants to redeem. Christ comes to invite us to be part of the redemptive plan.

Jesus comes to give us instructions for how we can join together in the redemption of the world. Think of the Sermon on the Mount as a behavior manual. As you move through your days, view your actions and your thoughts through the lens of the Sermon on the Mount. Do your thoughts and actions support this vision of peace, justice, mercy, and comfort? If not, how can you change to be more in alignment with God's vision of redemption?

We could use this All Saints Day as a reminder that we need to jump start our efforts to act as saints in this world. If that behavior means that we also get to be saints in the next world, swell.

But the good news of Jesus is that we don't have to wait until we die to experience redemption. We're already saints. We just need to remember to be about the business of sainthood, and to avoid the behaviors that distract us from our mission.