

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

November 2, 2025



SAINTS

on seeking a right way to live

by Drew Downs

Years ago, in a different place, a real saint of the church died. His fingerprints were everywhere in the building, in some parts, quite literally. There was still a closet named for him with tools he used to maintain the building ordered. He was a teacher and a character, famous around town, like many of the saints we know. And in the weeks that followed his death, I heard a familiar refrain: "he taught me everything I know." He wasn't just the right kind of person: he was the kind

everyone seemed to want to be. And, I want to reiterate, weren't.

I'm not meaning to insult anyone. Just want to state for the record that they weren't saints *like him*. They weren't like him at all. Which is, considering their own words, ironic.

Saints help us see the right way to live. They inspire and encourage. And we are called to witness that and consider following along.

ORDINARY TIME

2025

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

All Saints + All Souls

This week we remember one of the principal feasts of the church: All Saints' Day. It is a day of remembrance for all the people the church lifts up as deserving of special honor, often because of their contributions, works of miracles, or for having died in the service of the church as martyrs. We tend to think of the saints as the best of us. The people who have done stuff we probably could never do.

There are all kinds of saints and each gets their own feast day to honor them. But this day is the time we choose to honor them all together, like a team. And we don't spend the day picking our favorites or complaining about the starter who needs to ride the pine for a while to get his swing back. It is about the whole host of saints who show us the grace of God in their lives.

Common practice in many places, including here at St. Stephen's, is to also remember loved ones who have died. This is a practice that follows the tradition of All Souls' Day, which is the next day (November 2) and is essentially about remembering everyone else. Many today will blur the lines between these days, to elevate their loved ones to sainthood.

The point of our celebration is not to obsess about the rules of sainthood, however, but to see the examples of people who embodied the gospel **and how we might too**. We lift them up, not for their inhuman specialness, but for their human commonness — and how alike we all actually are.

With love,
Drew+

ORDINARY TIME

2025

FOR SUNDAY

All Saints' Day

November 1, 2025

Collect

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

Reading

Luke 6:20-31

Jesus looked up at his disciples and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

"Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

"Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

"Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets."

"But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

ORDINARY TIME

"Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

"Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

"Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Reflection

Jesus likes to flip expectations and turn over our assumptions. Something we might consider doing for him, as well. So when we hear the idea of turning the other cheek, we shouldn't assume the common understanding is what Jesus meant, let alone even coherent.

Jesus's Way of Love is compassionate and responsive to people's actual needs. It is full of hope for what can be and a commitment to engaging generously (rather than restricted, closed, entrenched) with strangers, friends, enemies, family: all of us. Which is why skepticism and confusion about how to do this ourselves can be a constant question for people of faith.

We're invited to embody these values. In that way, the question of how is far less important. Because these values are to permeate everything we do. Everything we are. Our work is to breathe love, even as we weep. To sweat love, even as we hunger. To be loving, always. It is the fuel that makes the vehicle go, not its destination.

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