



Labeled, "Our Lord appears among the clouds", this is an illustration from a 10th-century copy of Beatus of Liébana's *Illustrated Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Urgell Diocesan Museum in La Seu d'Urgell (Spain). Image: <http://catholicresources.org/Art/> In the Epistle Sunday, we'll hear, "We also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died." We'll hear the parable of the bridesmaids who fail to prepare for that day, which will be "dark and hopeless" for the unprepared, according to the O.T. lesson.

### Saints Are Those Who Make It Easier for Us to Believe in God. They Are Now at Rest. They Began the Song of Praise, and It is Our Turn to Continue It.

"Today is a special day in the life of the church. On this day, we remember those who have preceded us in the life of faith," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday. "We recall their lives as examples of courage and faithfulness, and we celebrate the heavenly hope to which they aspired.

"In doing so," he continued, "we find ourselves linked with them as sharers of a common destiny and hope. And, in the liturgy, we join our worship with their on-going worship and praise around the throne of God, celebrating together the grace of God in our lives.

"All Saints Day was a happy occasion for John Wesley as well. In his Journal entry for November 1, 1756, he writes: 'November 1 was a day of triumphant joy, as All Saints Day generally is. How superstitious are they who scruple giving God thanks for the lives and deaths of his saints!'

"All Saints was a joyous occasion for Wesley, because he realized that through this time we encounter deeply and profoundly what it means to be the Church—the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church which is one body in Jesus Christ. We are not 'self-made' Christians. We are not little 'islands' unto ourselves. Our lives are deeply and intimately linked together with those who've gone before, whether we like to admit it or not. Without the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, many of us would not be here this morning."

"As the early church grew and believers died, the church sought a way to give thanks for the lives of martyrs and others who had died victoriously in the faith. In some churches where persons had been martyred, it was customary to gather for a Communion service at the martyr's tomb. The tomb was often used as a Communion table." When All Saints was moved to November 1, "the Church issued a powerful witness and testimony to the triumph of good over evil, the Reign of God over the powers of darkness, and the defeat of the powers of death and hell by the power of God.

"All Saints is joyous, then, and it is important because we are connected to those who have preceded us. . . (W)e continue in their stead. We carry on their work and their testimony . . ."

They "were real human beings, as we are. . . . They were sinners, like us, but unimprovable perfection has never been a requirement for sainthood. Saints are people who definitely have feet of clay, but their example is still worth following. As Robert Louis Stevenson observed, (p. 2→)

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Sundays, 9:00 a.m.: G. K. Chesterton discussion series

Sundays, 10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

Sundays, 11:45 a.m.: Moderated post-service discussion

Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.: Evening Prayers

**Readings, 11/9:** Amos 5:18-24; Ps. 70; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Mt. 25:1-13.

**11/16:** Zeph. 1:7, 12-18; Ps. 90:1-8; 1 Thess. 5:1-10; Mt. 25:14-29.

**Prayer Emphases:** Thailand; Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church; Harvard Memorial Church, Cambridge, MA, and the Rev. Dr. Peter Gomes; Inter-University Christian Fellowship; parishioners on Bruins Circle.

**(Sermon, cont'd.)** 'Saints are sinners who keep on going.' And as one bishop from Sweden put it, 'Saints are those who make it easier for us to believe in God.' " And as a little boy said of stained-glass windows, "The saints are the people up there where the sun shines through." "In a few moments, we will pause and remember and give thanks for the lives of many who have inspired us to follow Jesus. We do so with the awareness that they have passed the baton on to us. They are at rest, but we are still in this together. They began the song of praise; it is now our turn to continue it."

#### Chesterton's Orthodoxy:

Sunday's 9 a.m. discussion: Chapter 8, "The Romance of Orthodoxy." For discussion questions, chapter text, and notes, visit [www.EpworthChapelOnTheGreen.org](http://www.EpworthChapelOnTheGreen.org).

