



# For All the Saints

There is no greater treasure than the persons who have helped us and encouraged us along the way. To look back across our lives and see warm faces and hear warm voices who believed in us is a blessing of the first order.

Similar, but not as personal, is the testimony and example of people who we didn't know, but whom we know about. These are the heroes of the bible. These are the authors of our books, the composers of our music, the forefathers and foremothers of our churches and denominations.

Still there are others, those whose ministry has brought us to where we are, but we know nothing of their work, not even their names.

For all the saints we give God thanks and join them in worship by lifting our alleluias. Lifetimes pass quickly. There isn't much time to think about saintly living. There isn't much time to plan a life of meaning and ministry. One simply lives life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and after the example of Jesus; and the brief life makes an eternal impression. Thanks be to God.

Individuals and congregations who dismiss or ignore the work of the saints who from their labor rest unknowingly cheapen their own lives, ministry, and worship. Such self-centeredness leaves a person or a congregation adrift, cut loose from meaningful identity and heritage. To think that all good and right work began with us is to place upon our shoulders a crushing load. We need stories of perseverance, of victory, of over-coming, of dignity, of faith or else our energy for ministry is unsustainable. We draw strength from our biblical, historical, personal, and congregational heritage.

To look back in this manner is to put our work in proper perspective as we turn toward the future. Might we be so blessed as to be an inspiration to someone who will come behind us? What greater legacy could we imagine? **For all the saints** is not just a hymn about the past, it is a hymn about the present and the future. Alleluia.

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