

Sermon Synopsis – All Saints Sunday – October 30, 2016
Hebrews 12: 1-2; Ephesians 1: 15-19; John 15: 8-12

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...

... this All Saints Sunday, folks came dressed as – or having in mind and heart - their favourite saint or special person who has made a difference for God in their lives. People who have been an inspiration to faithfulness and love. People who, by their life, have led, taught, encouraged, and equipped us to navigate the ups and downs of life and faith.

Why should Hallowe'en get all the press? Why should skulls, skeletons, ghosts, goblins, blood, vampires, "Spirit of Hallowe'en" cash-cow-stores... have all the attention?

They shouldn't – not for those who follow Jesus.

We have a great cloud of witnesses – the communion of saints – to inspire and encourage us to be and share the presence of Love in the world.

A myriad of special people and their gifts to us were remembered and celebrated:

- A war veteran and chaplain who modelled how to overcome personal obstacles
- St. Francis, who loved animals and all creation
- A Mother, a Father, who led and inspired their children to live with love, respect, curiosity, responsibility, creativity...
- A neighbour who listened when an outside listening-ear-and-heart were needed
- A parent who took a child to Sunday School
- A mentor friend who lived and taught a life of prayer and daily listening for God's guidance
- A piano or voice teacher who built up confidence for life
- An Auntie, a CGIT leader, a Minister, a Teacher...

The cloud of witnesses, past and present, was inspiring...and the array of saints and special people grew! We wrote on a heart, the names of the people who had touched our lives and left us these gifts. The faithful who have given gifts from their living, their presence. Gifts of wisdom, confidence, skill, authenticity, joy... the list could go on and on. That's the way with remembering blessings and love...

In life, there will be obstacles, there will be troubled times ahead.

Since we surrounded and inspired by faith-filled people, let us also lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely. Let us run the race set before us. Let us look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith... and of the faith of those who inspire us.

In these troubled times, whose memory, example, and gift points you in the right direction and gives you the courage you need in your daily decisions?

Take a moment to remember and accept that gift.