

## **On a liturgical Note; November 2021**

November can be a dark month - when we begin to take into our hearts (and into our bones!) that the longer evenings and warm days of summer and autumn are well past and that, with the fading of the leaves on the trees, the winter is upon us. Even as the colour of nature around us changes from the green of vibrant growth to the gold and russet of hibernation, the liturgy seems to add to our despair by presenting us with thoughts of death and departure on the feast of the Holy Souls on the second of the month – a sense of sombre remembrance picked up again on the 14th of the month as the nation keeps its annual silence and the poppies fall once again. Remembrance is also in the mind of the Catholic Community in England and Wales as on Sunday 7 November the Bishops' Conference have asked for Masses to be said in all diocesan cathedrals for those who have died in the pandemic, and in thanks for the medical staff, care workers and family members who have accompanied and assisted them in the last moments of their lives.

And yet November has opened with the solemn remembrance not of the power of darkness and decay, but the triumph of the light - the true light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. The solemnity of ALL SAINTS (All Hallows as it is sometimes known – therefore making the last day of October ALL HALLOW'S EVE, which eventually became HALLOW'EEN ) speaks of light, happiness and peace, and that blessedness which is the fruit and result of a close following of the way of Christ and of his gospel. It not only invites us to reflect and be truly grateful for all those SAINTS OF GOD who have been in past generations (some have been canonised by the Church, others not); it is also a challenge and an invitation to us to be those 'SAINTS' in our modern world.

Not the 'plaster saints' or holier-than-thou figurines which run the risk of putting us off rather than attracting us to the way of Christ! No, we are called to be those people who actually believe the words that Saint John spoke in the second reading on the feast of All Saints – "Think of the love the Father has lavished on us..." and once we have THOUGHT – then we LIVE ACCORDINGLY.

The old saying goes, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness". May you light a candle of Christ-like goodness in your parish, community and family in these next weeks.

Canon Philip