



## **For All Saints and All Souls**

By Jarrett Kerbel (10/24/25)

Sitting in the woods the other day, the following dialogue played out in my mind:

My phone rings as I place a call to our Bishop.

“Hello Jarrett!” says our fabulous Bishop, “What is on your mind?”

“Well, Bishop,” I reply, “You are not going to believe this, but...”

“Oh no, what now?” says the Bishop clearly bracing for some fresh crisis, conflict or scandal.

“All good news here, dear Bishop,” I reply, “It turns out I have met a bona fide Saint in our congregation and I want to know what to do next, please?”

The squirrels around me wondered why I was chuckling to myself, but I found this imaginary exchange both funny and joyful. Too often, the Episcopal Church - and especially clergy - focus on the negatives. We habitually fixate on crisis, conflict, decline, and scandal. What if, I thought to myself, we looked for the Saints among us instead? What if we looked for the Holy, the Good and the Sacred shining out from God in our community every day and every week?

Now, I have met people I consider Saints during my 32 years of ministry. Saints are people who are especially transparent to the light and love of God to the degree that an encounter with such a person brings you closer to God. Like all the Saints, these folks were a mixed bag of gifts and liabilities. Like all of us, they had all fallen short of God’s glory in one way or another. Yet, God’s blessings always overcame any negativity.

All Saints, All Souls Sunday is coming up on November 2. While All Saints Day is November 1 and All Faithful Departed is on November 3, most churches squish both together on the first Sunday in November. To enhance our celebration, I am inviting the congregation to bring pictures of their beloved departed and their favorite Saints to adorn the altar with the “Communion of Saints” on All Saints, All Souls Sunday. In this age of excellent printers and internet image libraries, feel free to print out pictures or icons of Saints who inspire you. For example, I may bring images of Pauli Murray, Septima Clark, Bayard Rustin, Ella Baker or Dorothy Day. Your children can feel free to draw or AI generate Saints who matter to them. Talking about your Saints as a family is a great way to grow in faith together, as well!

In Hebrews 12:1, Paul writes, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” How blessed we are to have Saints as models of life in Christ to support us on our path to God!