SUNDAY link

1 November 2026
All Saints' Day

connecting faith and daily life

Count your blessings

We give you thanks, Lord, for the blessings you pour upon us. Give us wisdom to recognise when we are blessed, open hearts to receive our blessings, gratitude to rejoice in them, and generosity to pass them on to others. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Caroline Fletcher *reflects on* Matthew 5:1-12

People may feel blessed because they have a great job, a lovely home, a wonderful family. They may talk about how blessed they feel after taking the holiday of a lifetime, or simply because they have good food and a roof over their head.

Jesus' view on who is blessed differs radically – and it's pretty shocking. The Beatitudes may be hard to understand but they are worth struggling with, for at their heart lie hope, grace and joy. There are a number of words in the original Greek that are difficult to adequately translate into English. *Makarioi*, which the NRSV Bible translates as 'blessed', is one. It describes incredible joy. In the light of this, some of the Beatitudes seem very strange indeed. How can people who are persecuted and reviled have deep joy? How can Christ tell them to 'rejoice and be glad'? The answer to these paradoxes lies in the type of kingdom Jesus was bringing in. His message was one of incredible grace. His kingdom is open to those whom the world shuns. The message of the Beatitudes is not one that equates blessing with human effort, as is sometimes assumed. Jesus is not teaching that blessing comes by trying to be meeker or purer in heart. In fact, the Beatitudes declare how things are, rather than how they could be if we try harder. They simply announce how joyful we can be because Christ's kingdom has broken in, bringing hope to those desperate for God's help.

The Common Worship Lectionary

Part 5 – why the Common Worship Lectionary still matters

by Connor Hurley

The continued use of the *Common Worship Lectionary* is evidence that many Christian communities value the shared scriptural rhythm that it offers. It helps congregations avoid narrowing their focus to a few well-known stories, and ensures that challenging passages aren't skipped. In an age when many people engage with scripture only sporadically, if at all, the *Common Worship Lectionary* offers a balanced and comprehensive way of hearing voices from throughout the Bible. It also links local worshippers to a worldwide conversation, as many churches are reading from and listening to the same passage on the same day.

Whether a parish is traditional or informal, the *Common Worship Lectionary* acts as scaffolding to support preaching, teaching and worship. Its value lies not in rigid rules but in encouraging steady, thoughtful engagement with scripture throughout the year.

> 'Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring… the news of the boundless riches of Christ.'
>
> Ephesians 3:8

People of the *Common Worship Lectionary*

Martin of Porres

by Alan Jefferies

Martin of Porres (1579-1639), who is commemorated on Tuesday, was a Dominican friar from Lima, Peru. Born to a Spanish nobleman and a formerly enslaved African woman, he experienced racial prejudice from an early age. He dedicated his life to caring for and accommodating those who were sick, hungry and marginalised. At his monastery he worked as a barber and a nurse, treating people with whatever tools he had to hand.

One story tells of him feeding people with food he'd borrowed from the monastery store, and calmly accepting his punishment when he was discovered. Another story recounts how he set up a makeshift hospital in his own room when the infirmary overflowed. He was also said to care for mice and stray animals rather than kill them.

Canonised in 1962, Martin is remembered less for grand speeches than for quietly refusing to look away from those in need.

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