

In the worship service, we have a formal dialogue with the Word of God. We first approach God with the Prayer of the Day. Then God responds to the Prayer of the Day with the First Reading.

The First Reading

Throughout the year, the First Reading is usually from the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is the books of the Bible that were written centuries before Jesus was born.

In the Christian faith, we believe that the Word of God is revealed fully to us through Jesus Christ. And the First Reading gives a more general understanding of God's Word without Jesus.

Most of the time, the First Reading is from the Old Testament. But there are exceptions to the rule. One exception to the rule is during the Easter season when the First Reading is often from the Book of Acts in the New Testament to celebrate our new life as God's people through Christ's death and resurrection.

Another exception to the rule is this Sunday, All Saints Sunday (Nov. 1st). The First Reading for All Saint's Sunday is from the Book of Revelation in the New Testament to celebrate the salvation of heaven in Christ Jesus.

Read Revelation 7:9-17.

- Martin Luther thought that the Book of Revelation should be considered to be an appendix to the New Testament. He said that someone had to be knowledgeable about what the rest of the New Testament said in order to understand this book in the first place.

- This text is a vision of heaven's celebration of God's salvation in Christ Jesus.
- The Lamb is Jesus Christ.
- The blood of the Lamb is Christ's death on the cross.
- Most scholars believe that Revelation was written when Christians were facing severe persecution in the Roman Empire. This was written to give Christians hope during a very dismal time.
- The heavenly host who were clothed in white (a sign of baptism) was those who came out of the great ordeal. In other words, they were the ones martyred (or executed by the Romans) for publically proclaiming Christ.
- Even if we lose our lives in this world for the sake of the gospel, we will have eternal life in heaven with Christ Jesus.
- This text is also where one of our Hymns of Praise comes from.
- Since All Saints Day is the Christian memorial day, this text is appropriate for remembering those who have died and celebrating the salvation we all share in Christ.

Conclude with the Prayer of the Day for All Saints Sunday:

Almighty God, you have knit your people together in one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in lives of faith and commitment, and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared for those who love you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.