



After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10)

But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day; the saints triumphant rise in bright array; the King of Glory passes on His way, Alleluia! Alleluia! (LSB 677.7)

Christ is risen! We Christians therefore have the certain hope that on the Last Day, we and all who have gone before us in the Faith will also be raised from the dead, our bodies reunited with our souls, to live in eternal bliss in the presence of our Triune God.

This very hope informs how we grieve the deaths of loved ones; while we are sad that they are no longer with us in this life, we know that we will see them again and feast with them forever at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And in the meantime, whenever we are receiving God's gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His Divine Services to us, they are gathered with us on the other side of the altar!

Furthermore, this very hope informs how we approach the end of our own earthly lives, encompassing our continuing to receive God's gifts, our medical decision-making, our planning for our funerals (including how we want our bodies treated after our deaths), and the legacies we wish to leave in our families, congregations and church institutions, and communities. Through all of this, even in our weakest moments, God uses us to help our brothers and sisters grow in Him by carrying out their vocations to care for us, and at the same time by prayerfully considering their own end of life planning. Yes, even in our dying moments, we truly remain indispensable members of the Body of Christ.

All Saints' Day reminds us that the sanctity of life does not end with our deaths, but extends into eternity. Thanks be to God!

Note: In July 2025, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis hosted the *Dying Well in Christ: A Forum on the Church's Care at Life's End*. Many of the resources from that event are available at https://scholar.csl.edu/sem/dying_well/. The follow-up conference, *Dying Well in Christ: The Conversation Continues*, is scheduled to take place at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, April 5-7, 2027. Further details will be available the week of November 16 at <https://ctsfw.regfox.com/dying-well-in-christ>. We highly commend these to you!