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## *All Saints Day And Every Day*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler,  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip**

*"Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Jesus Christ."*

All Saints Day came a bit early for me this year. For me, that holy day has become an occasion to remember people who have shown me something of God. Ultimately, a saint is someone who has shown me God, perhaps in a small way and sometimes in a large way. Frederick Buechner, the great writer, once put it something like this: "In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief; these handkerchiefs are called saints."

It is often death which provokes us to consider saints. This past Monday, the Cathedral was packed for the funeral of one of our saints. We celebrated his life, with honor and fondness. His son delivered one of the more stirring reflections I have heard recently, telling us that his ailing father was able-even in debilitating illness-to show others how to be a neighbor. We buried a body on Monday, but we raised up a saint. All Saints Day came early.

My own aunt died a few weeks ago. I realize that every family has its strains of sweetness; my aunt carried that strain in our family. She also had another of my family's strains: a rather idiosyncratic religious identity. Sometimes, she did not know whether to call herself a Christian. But she was certainly a saint. She showed me something of divine favor and grace. All Saints Day came early for me, through her.

On November 1, All Saints Day itself, the Cathedral will host a dinner for the homeless of Atlanta, and we will celebrate a Requiem Eucharist. As you read in the Cathedral Times last week, this has become one of the great Cathedral events of the year. I have found that our All Saints Day Homeless Requiem has come to represent a true foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. Each year, I am reminded of that glorious moment in the Book of the Revelation to John: "After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (7:9). These are saints, showing me something of God.

This Sunday, November 5, we will baptize new Christians into the church, making them saints, too. We do not know yet what kinds of persons these infants might be. We do not know what in particular they will show us. But insofar as they are baptized Christians, they will show us something of God; they will be saints. In making them saints, we allow ourselves to be shown holiness through them.

It is often said that, for the Christian, every day can be an Easter Day. Every day, we can wake up to new life with the same energy that we might reserve for the Feast of the Resurrection itself. Our nightly sleep gives us the occasion to see every morning as a new Easter.

The same can be said for All Saints Day. Every day can be an All Saints Day. That day requires our willingness to see God in another person. It may be that we can not see holiness and grace clearly until we see holiness and grace in another human person. In other words, God needs saints in order to reveal himself. We do not know grace until we know it

another person. If so, we do not know God fully until we have known grace in another person. Maybe this is why The Revelation to John says, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with people" (Rev. 21.3).

Sam Candler signature



The Very Rev. Sam Candler

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