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## *The Sunday Procession*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by Dean Sam Candler**

When I think of Sunday morning church, I begin by imagining processions. I do not mean the great processional hymn, which accompanies the choir and liturgical ministers each Sunday as they enter the nave. I mean the many, individual, processions that each of us takes as we prepare to enter the church on Sunday mornings.

All across the city, and from beyond the city, our Sunday morning processions begin when we get out of bed. Already, we are considering whether, and how, we will get to church that day. And, of course, our mind is still sorting through worries and hopes, maybe some left from our night dreams and maybe some left from yesterday. Some of us are by ourselves, wondering what to wear or eat for the day, and maybe even whether we might rather stay at home on Sunday morning. Others of us have been out of bed for hours, having hardly thought about the choice, because we have small children and household responsibilities to manage.

Now, the morning routines start to rule our time, and some things begin to go wrong. The dog needs more care this morning. One family member seems ill. The kitchen dishes need to be washed. The car will not start. Maybe this morning's news strangely interests us more than yesterday's did. A fallen tree, a stranded car, a traffic jam, interrupts us.

But all those events are part of the procession. The true procession, every Sunday, winds its way through our own thoughts and imaginations and worries, walks through kitchen duties and family frictions, and then joins the traffic of streets and expressways, in trains and buses and cars.

Outside our individual homes, we join others in this Sunday procession. In a car, we enter the crowded church parking lot, and we begin to navigate politeness and urgency. The church service will start in a few minutes. By the time we have entered the front doors, we have been irritated several times, worried several more times, maybe laughed and talked, and maybe even cried, or comforted the tears of someone else crying. As we walk down the hall, towards the nave itself, we are seeing familiar faces, some of them our old friends, and others completely new. This is the procession, the gathering of the faithful—known and unknown, from near and far—towards some holy event.

Finally, we are in our pews, or seats, maybe the same ones we were in last week, but maybe not. Maybe we are in a new place this Sunday. Maybe we are in our old place, but with a new spirit, a new outlook, a new perspective.

The processional hymn begins. The formal line of vested ministers slides forward from behind us. They are only the very last, in a long line of those who have processed that day. All of us have processed now, towards some gathering that we trust, towards a sacred community that we know from experience, will produce something in us. Maybe our gathering will show us love again, or respect again, or holiness again. Maybe, we pray, our souls will know grace and blessing again, after our morning effort and routine. Such discipline often results in a grace that frees us again.

And oh! Of course! Yes, of course, there will be others whose processions are still going on. They are late for the processional hymn (and maybe late for lots of the rest of the service!), but they too are dutifully processing, in their own time and according to their own needs. The Church rolls on with all of us, some of us on time, of course, and some of us not on time. But all of us process. All of us are part of the grand procession of the

saints, making our way towards grace and holiness Sunday after Sunday. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler  
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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