

SERMON - ALL SAINTS DAY - 1 NOVEMBER 2009  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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*Rev. 7:13-14 (KJV)*

*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? [14] And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

What is a saint? What makes a person a saint? Who is a saint?

The Revelation of John says *saints are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

Who are Saints?

To quote Evelyn Waugh, "*Saints are simply men and women who have fulfilled their natural obligation which is to approach God.*"

What makes a saint?

Soren Kierkegaard, the "Dismal Dane" wrote, "*God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners.*"

That's a great quote. "*He makes saints out of sinners.*"

Then if *Saints are simply men and women who have fulfilled their natural obligation which is to approach God.*" and *God makes saints out of sinners.* then maybe there is hope for all of us.

Saints are those of us who have established the proper working relationship with God.

In other words, they have taken literally the commandment to love God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their mind.

In effect they have turned it all over to God; they have given their life to Jesus; they have let the Holy Spirit direct their total being.

Someone once said, "Saints have a past, sinners have a future, ."

Saints aren't little plastic statues that sit on your dashboard or your shelf. They are living breathing persons with all the faults, the foibles and the imperfections that we all live with daily, but they have given those faults, those foibles and those imperfections over to God.

Saints know God firsthand. One of my favorite saint stories is the one about Saint Teresa of Avila, who when traveling with some of her fellow nuns along a rainy, muddy road one day had their carriage slide off into a even more muddy ditch and turn over. Saint Teresa crawled out of the overturned vehicle, climbed up the side of the ditch back onto the road and standing there soggy and covered with mud, raised her fists toward heaven and shouted at the Almighty, "No wonder you have no friends, the way you treat them."

Saint Peter, who denied our Lord three times, became the first Patriarch of the church in Antioch, became the first Patriarch of the church in Rome, the first Pope. Peter, although he sinned, even sinned against our Lord, became the leader, the Rock of the Church.

Saints are not perfect. There is a spirituality of imperfection in every saint, a knowledge of who they are, an honest knowledge of who they really are, in regard to God and their bond to God.

We all have the potential to be a Saint.

First of all, we are all sinners. We all have fallen short of the Glory of God. We all have had our sins forgiven through the Cross and Passion of our Lord. We all have the hope of eternal life through His Mighty Resurrection.

But have we given Him ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable, Holy and living sacrifice.

Have we given Him our all.

Those that we honor today, did.

They held back nothing.

We, today, honor those that made the decision to give themselves totally to God in their daily lives. Some are known and honored by the Church like Saint Francis or Mother Teresa. Most are unknown except to God.

And as the hymn says, "And you can be one, too."

Amen.