
Friendships

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

My dinner the other night, with old friends, prompts me to begin this harvest season of Thanksgiving with thanksgiving for friendships. I realize we are not at the official Day of Thanksgiving yet, but surely we can begin practicing for it!

Yes, let's practice for Thanksgiving. At a lovely dinner the other night, my wife and I enjoyed long conversation with two other couples whom we have known for a long time. The six of us have known each other through ups and downs, through moves and illnesses, through thrills and highlights. I remembered a poem I had written.

That evening prompted me to consider friendships, and how I am so thankful for them. I give thanks not just for my own friends, but for yours, too. I am thankful for friendships all over the place! The way we have friends heartens our souls.

Friendships form in beautiful ways throughout our lives. Friendships are intertwined histories. Friendships blossom when we meet mutual challenges, whether we prevailed in those challenges or not. Friendships happen when tragedies are experienced together. Friendships happen when we are being embarrassed with someone. Maybe a friend is someone with whom we have been weak together, maybe together in a drifting sailboat. A friend is someone with whom we watch our favorite team lose a close game. A friend is someone we have sat on a porch with, someone we have sat in a bar with.

A friend is someone whose child we thrill to see walking towards us. A friend is someone with whom we have gone on a double date. Friends are the people with whom we have walked together in the woods. A friend is the person we have sat beside in church. Friends have children in the same class as our children in school. Friends coach children's sports teams together.

Friends go fishing together. Friends share staff meetings together. Friends may even invest money together. Friends play bridge together; they play poker. They golf and run together. The people with whom we have gone on long road trips together are our friends. Friends are the people with whom we have been stuck at airports together. Friends tend vegetable and flower gardens together. Friends go to a funeral together. Friends go to a wedding together!

Friends are the people with whom we can be silent, for an hour, and feel afterwards that we have had an exhilarating conversation. Friends know who we are, and they love us anyway. Friends are the people we know well, and we love them anyway. Friends hearten our souls.

So, I begin the Thanksgiving holidays early this year. Thanksgiving is a season, anyway, not a day. It's a lifestyle; it's a practice. And I give thanks for friends, of all sorts and sizes and histories and hopes, yours and mine. My short little poem is called "Crystalized Crusty."

Crystalized crusty
Seasoned friendships
Thicken rich with time

Taste like Parmigiano

And burn like fatwood
Georgia pine.

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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