
Hello, Saints!

**An article for the *Cathedral Times*
by the Very Rev. Sam Candler**

Did you know you are mentioned in the Bible? It's right there, in the first verse of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi." That's you! You are in the Cathedral of St. Philip; thus, in my way of reading it, you are in Philippi! You are the saints!

Hey, do you have any plans for All Saints Day?

I realize that's not the usual question we ask around this time of year. We usually ask about the night before; do you have any plans for Halloween? And Halloween plans range from gatherings to parties to monitoring children. Great fun, and they will be this year, too, even with highly modified pandemic plans.

But what about the day itself? All Saints Day, November 1. It's a Sunday this year, and I have an idea for us. I have an idea besides the one which you would expect me to make, that you should participate in one of the online, or in-person, events of the Cathedral! Of course I would say that!

Here's the brief summary of formal events (but my idea is next paragraph!). On All Saints Day morning, we will have our (now) usual outdoor services of koinonia, and our (now) usual online recorded services of Holy Eucharist. All that morning, we will be recognizing and honoring new saints who have been baptized recently! Later on Sunday afternoon, at 4:00, we will offer an online Evensong that remembers parishioners and our friends who have died in the past year. This is always a sweet and holy time. Help us remember! Finally, at 7:00 pm on All Saints Day, we offer our online Requiem Eucharist for the Homeless, usually a large and crowded event in the cathedral. But we are making it work this year online! Again, join us for that, too!

But I have another All Saints Day idea. There is another practice we might adopt, which is not about going to a party, or a gathering, or praying online.

What if, on All Saints Day, we were to greet every person we see that day, with the words, "Hello, Saint!" "Hello, Saint Sam!" "Hello, Saint John!" "Hello, Saint Mary!" "Hello, Saint." I urge you to try it.

These days, maybe more than ever, we might benefit from recognizing each other as saints of God, as holy people of God. We are in the midst of travail and stress. We have been cooped up beyond measure, usually with those we love, yes, ...but still. We need a break. And, in a week or so, we will have some sort of stressed reaction to the national elections, however they turn out. Many of us thought we had hit a wall about three months ago, then again last month, then again last week, and on and on. We have all faced so much loss in the last seven months; it is exhausting us.

Thus, on All Saints Day, we need each other, we need the "Saints of God," more than ever. Even the smallest powerful greeting, "You are a Saint!" can be a spiritual blessing to someone. In the Bible, the "saints" are not just the super-heroes, the extraordinary wonder-workers; the "saints" are the regular ordinary baptized people of God. Let's bless each other with those words this All Saints Sunday, just as Saint Paul blessed so many of his congregations – from Rome (Romans 1:7) to Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2 and 2 Corinthians 1:1) to Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1) to Philippi, and even to Atlanta today. He called all of them "saints."

You are a saint. I am a saint. We are made holy by the love and grace of God. Let's call each other by that name, instead of any of the other labels floating around our world these days. Hello, Saints!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Sam Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip

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