

**Luke 6:20-31**  
**St. Andrew's, Nogales**

**Rev. M. Lucie Thomas**  
**7 November 2010**

**All Saints**

Good morning, Saints!

(listen for response, hand to ear)

Let's try that again. Good morning, Saints!

Were you surprised to be called saints this morning? In our church we don't usually address each other that way, but there are other Christian Churches that do.

In the earliest days when the church was forming the word most commonly used as a title for Christians was 'saints' which is hagioi in Greek, and it literally means 'holy ones'.

So, good morning, Holy Ones!

(listen for reply, hand to ear)

In his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, better known as the Ephesians, Paul prays for them, writing, "I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints."

The riches of his glorious inheritance are meant for us also, today's saints.

Yes, I know, many of us have a hard time thinking of ourselves as saints, because we have a picture in our heads that the word saint means someone who is extraordinarily, perhaps heroically, virtuous. Those whose statues are found in churches and about whom books are written and icons painted.

But the truth is that we are all saints, each and every one of us.

But before you get your heads swelled up, remember this, we are sinners also. Yes, you heard me; we are both saints and sinners. We Episcopalians believe that it is the journey that counts, that journey where, although we are not born sinful, we get contaminated by sin in this world, and therefore need to journey toward the light.

For Paul being filled by the incomprehensible love of God is having “the eyes of the heart enlightened [that] you may know what is the hope to which he (Jesus) has called you.”

Paul’s letter focuses on love and hope and faith and redemption and power and the “fullness of him who fills all in all”. Powerful stuff, this. God continues to speak such powerful dreams in our hearts, the prophets, patriarchs, mystics, saints, and, as our Presiding Bishop has said, “in human flesh in Jesus, and in each one of us at baptism. All are welcome, all are fed, all are satisfied, all are healed of the wounds and lessenings that are part of the not-yet-ness of creation....” (Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori, consecration address.)

In just a little while we will baptize John Alexander Oliver, and welcome him into this company of saints both here on earth and in heaven. And our prayer for him will be that God “give him an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love (God), and the gift of joy and wonder in all (God’s) works.” (BCP, p. 308)

It’s that journey, once again. It will not all be sweetness and light. John will make mistakes, he will err and need to ask forgiveness, but given that inquiring and discerning heart, that courage to persevere and that spirit to know and love God his journey in life may be fruitful, so that at life’s end God may acknowledge him as “a sinner of God’s own redeeming.” And at that point we will pray, “Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.”

That glorious company of the saints in light, for John, starts with us, those of us present at his baptism this morning. After baptizing him, I will walk him down the aisle so that each one of you may greet him and welcome him personally in this “glorious company of the saints in light.”

Remember, that's us.

Amen.