

Today we celebrate All Saints Day. We are remembering the lives of people who have died who we especially recall because they point our attention to how they lived their lives following Christ. Saints are ordinary people that have lived and shared God's Love with the people around them and are part of that mystery of what we call the Communion of Saints.

We might expect Saint Francis of Assisi to direct our attention to living life in harmony with others, all creatures, and the earth itself, but what about Albrecht Durer, John Muir, Florence Nightingale or Evelyn Underhill who are part of a great cloud of witnesses. They have answered the call "to come follow me" in their own unique and imperfect way. Take a look at some of Lesser Feasts and Fasts list of Saints and wonder how you our following Christ in this critical time of living. Investigate and be surprised at who we have as a Church community named as a Saint.

All Soul's Day follows all Saints Day, on November 3rd and we recollect all the faithful people who have died; although our loved ones may not be noted by some liturgical recognition, we also remember their Love that continues to deepen our Love and the many ways those who have gone before us enable us to live more compassionately. We Love God and follow Christ discovering that our lives are more filled with joy, however challenging or difficult the path we walk. As Love grows in us, we walk more deeply in the Light of Christ and find that we are part of the transformation of a risen life. May we with Lazarus "come out" of darkness and the places where we are bound and renew our life in Christ.

In the passage from the Gospel of John about Lazarus, beloved friend of Jesus and brother of Mary and Martha, we see many parallels with the resurrection. Even Jesus weeping is the same word used when he weeps over the people of Jerusalem before he enters the city. Now he weeps with Mary, with the heart of God. The stone is rolled away and Lazarus is not healed, he is raised from the dead pointing toward the day of Resurrection when Jesus is resurrected.

This passage however is firmly grounded in the concrete realities of earthly existence. We are asked to join with the grief and lamenting of the sisters, the terrible reality of death, and the anger at Jesus that Lazarus died. We are invited to wonder about the confusion around the meaning of the resurrection and the amazing moment when Lazarus comes out of the tomb. His family, not Jesus, unbinds him—so Lazarus himself may throw off the bands of death. We are left to wonder about the new life and the commitment that Lazarus lived, following Jesus even to his death. His encounter with Jesus leads him into a new life.

We too are invited into a new life right now. The promise is not for some future day, it is for now. The promise is for when we are lost and wandering, sad or confused; the promise is for when are purposefully seeking out our vocation in the strife of a troubled world, a wounded Earth, or a hard road. The promise is for more abundant joy to share as we find the breath of the Spirit in the gift of rain, the wonder of growing and the covenant of Love in a rainbow.

We are being invited to "come out!" and encounter the Risen one who gifts us with new life.

*Pastor Susan*