



14 March 2018

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

Romans 1:1 *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."*

“My Sainted Aunt!” This was my father’s favourite expression of surprise or dismay. As a boy this puzzled me, because I knew his aunt, and Aunty Alice was no saint. As far as I knew, saints were in the windows of the church. I suspect that this idea still lurks somewhere inside many of us: saints are history. Except perhaps for Mother Theresa. And Desmond Tutu. So when we read Paul’s greeting to “God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints” it is easy for the truth of this passage to pass us by.

The dictionary defines ‘saint’ as “an extremely virtuous person”,¹ which at first glance invokes the response – “Well that’s not me!” However, Paul hastens to add that when he refers to saint, he is not describing someone who has an innate, natural holiness. Paul is writing to those in whom the “righteousness of God is revealed through faith” (Rom 1:17). So a ‘saint’ is someone who is willing to step aside and allow God’s grace to be revealed. The virtue of a ‘saint’ is not the personal perfection of an individual; instead, sainthood is seen when the love of God flows through flawed, weak individuals and touches the lives of the poor, the marginalized and the dispirited.

Saints are people like you and me.

Thought:

If I ever become a Saint — I surely be one of "darkness".

I will continually be absent from Heaven — to light the light of those in darkness on earth.

As quoted in *Mother Teresa : Come Be My Light* (2007) by Brian Kolodiejchuk

¹ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/saint>

To Sing:

*Oh, when the saints go marching in
Oh, when the saints go marching in
Lord I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in*

[Luther G. Presley](#) (lyrics)
& [Virgil Oliver Stamps](#) (music).

The Fifth Sunday in Lent

From Death to Life

The Scripture passage for the day is drawn from Rueben Job and Norman Shawchuck, A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and other Servants, (Nashville, The Upper Room 1983), 129.

This reflection is from my own devotional exercises for the day (Rev. Pete Grassow)