

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

The Rev. J.D. McQueen, II - All Saints' Episcopal Church, San Diego, CA

I love to read the lives of the saints because while they're so varied, they all share a certain quality that comes from being made children of God.

- Yesterday was feast of James Hannington, who was a missionary bishop to eastern equatorial Africa, was martyred in Uganda late in the 19th c.
- After being captured on order of King Mwanga, who was hostile to the gospel, and whose last words after being stabbed repeatedly with spears were: "Go; tell Mwanga that I die for the people of Buganda, and that I have purchased the road to Uganda with my blood."
- And while that kind of witness stirs everything within me, I'm just as comforted by the picture painted by C.S. Lewis in his novel *The Great Divorce* of a woman named Sarah Smith, who was completely anonymous on earth, but is so glorious in heaven that she's mistaken for the Blessed Mother!

At baptism, we're given access to that same quality shared by all the saints – the dazzling brilliance of Holy Spirit at work in us, empowering us to become most fully ourselves.

- We can see in the lives of the saints that God doesn't make us all the same.
- Instead like the burning bush, the fire of God's presence in our lives is striking and attractive precisely because we're *not* consumed by it.

While it's helpful and encouraging to see this in the lives of the saints, it's even more important to see it in our own lives.

- Take some time this week and pray for the help of the Holy Spirit to get to know who you are and who God has made you to be.
- Think about the formative events and people in your life; the things that delight you, the things that always seem to carry a kind of heaviness with them.

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Think about times in your life where you can see that God was at work; guiding, consoling, protecting, making connections.

- Once you've identified them, what kinds of patterns do you see?
- How did you recognize that God was in those things?

It's so important that we take time every day to meet God in the silence of our hearts, whether we're looking back on our whole lives, the last 24 hours, or just a single event or interaction.

- Helps us to recognize more quickly when God is at work in our lives and *cooperate*,
- And it's in this *active response* to God that we come to know Him *and ourselves* most deeply.

This is *also* what allows us to trust in God's love when we *can't* recognize what He's doing.

- So don't wait until you're already in the midst of suffering or confusion, when you're already struggling with some combination of doubt, fear, anger, and resentment.
- *Do that work now.*

Let God show you the fullness of who you are and how beautiful He has created you to be, so that the testimony your own life might move others to seek out that quality for themselves.