

The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa

All Saints Sunday
Sunday November 4
Luke 19:1-10
Ecclesiasticus 2:2-11
Ephesians 1:11-23

It has been a full week here at St. Andrew's.

On Monday we remembered and gave thanks to God to one of our charter members. John Van Slooten, was father, grandfather and great grandfather to some in this congregation. John was a friend to many of us who knew him in different ways through the 98 years of his life. There was much in his life to be thankful for. During his funeral we remembered the day of John's baptism, the day when the church gathered around him and professed the Apostles Creed. The Apostles Creed dates back to the earliest years of the Church and has been proclaimed by Christians at baptism through the centuries. As the Church, we gathered Monday and professed our confident hope that the journey John began at his baptism has reached its fulfillment as he now rests in peace, and lives with all of God's faithful departed sons and daughters.

On Thursday this week, we celebrated the Feasts of All Saints, and the Day of Remembrance for all the Faithful Departed. On that day we remembered the lives those men and women who have through the centuries lived as disciples of Jesus. On that day we remembered the great saints, the cloud of witnesses from every tribe and people and nation and tongue. On that day we remembered those who lived and died centuries ago. On that day we remembered the saints that we have known, the saints who have touched our lives. We remembered our fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors. We remembered the Saints of this Church who are buried in the memorial garden. Again, as we remembered the Saints and the Faithful Departed, we proclaimed the Apostle's Creed.

It has been a full week here at St. Andrew's even as it has been a full week in your homes and neighborhoods. It has been a week when perhaps you went to work or school. It has been a week when perhaps you cared for children, grandchildren or parents. A week when perhaps you dressed up in a costume and collected candy, or perhaps you gave candy away. Maybe it was a week when you went to a game or two, or a concert or two. A week when perhaps you experienced illness yourself, or the illness of someone you loved. It was a week when you probably had some successes and some failure, some joys and disappointments. It was a week when you said or did some things that you were proud of and some things that embarrassed you. It was a week when you laughed and cried. It was a week when perhaps you had a disagreement with a member of your family or a co-worker or maybe a week in which you were reconciled with someone. It was a week when perhaps the news of the world left you in despair or perhaps inspired you to hope.

As we celebrated the lives of All the Saints here at Church this past week, it is important for us to remember that saints are not people who necessarily spent a great deal of their time in Church. God forbid. No, the Saints were people who spent most of their life outside of Church doing many of the things that you were about this past week; working, studying, laughing, crying, succeeding and failing, caring for loved ones, facing their own struggles. We do the saints a disservice when we lock them up in church.

Zacchaeus is a great model for us as we gather on All Saints Sunday. The Zacchaeus we meet in the Gospel is not a church goer. In fact, Zacchaeus was despised by righteous church goers of his day. He was the chief tax collector. Everything I said last week about tax collectors being thieves, traitors and extortionists is even more true for Zacchaeus. He is the chief tax collector, and he was rich. That means he was good at what he did. He excelled as a thief, traitor and extortionist. My suspicion is that the righteous Jews of Jericho hated Zacchaeus with a passion. That is why they grumbled when Jesus chose to stay with Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus is a model for sainthood not because he kept the law, he did not. Not because he spent time in Church, he did not. Zacchaeus is a model for sainthood because he was found by Jesus. Zacchaeus, was lost, and Jesus

found him. The name Zacchaeus means righteous and pure. When he climbed that sycamore, Zacchaeus was anything but righteous and pure. He became righteous and pure by the mercy of God. Likewise, Zacchaeus was made a saint by the mercy of God.

Zacchaeus is a model for sainthood because he was extravagant in his gratitude. He repaid those he defrauded and cheated over and above what the law required. Extravagantly, he gave half of what he owned to the poor. God was rich in the mercy he poured upon Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was rich in the thanks he returned to God. Did Zacchaeus become a follower of Jesus? Did he join other Christians in remembering Jesus after Easter? Perhaps. Some say that Luke records his name in the Gospel because Zacchaeus was known among the post Easter disciples. But regardless, Zacchaeus lived his life extravagantly in his service, not in the Church, but in the world. That is where the holiest of saints are living their faith. In the world.

This weekend our celebration of All Saints ends with the baptism of Zachary Danks. Isn't it too ironic that Zachary is to be baptized on the day we hear about Zacchaeus?

What a perfect what to end our All Saints celebration! We began on Monday by professing our faith at the funeral of our oldest, charter member John, and we end today by professing our faith at the baptism of our newest member Zachary. The same Apostles Creed we proclaimed for John on Monday, we proclaim for Zachary today.

We remembered through the week the fullness of life given to the Saints who have died. We celebrate today the fullness of life promised to Zachary. As we celebrate this baptism, Kim and Brandon, together with his god parents, and maybe his older sister, will make some promises. They will promise to bring him up in the Christian life and faith. They will promise to help him grown into the full stature of Jesus.

And, we will make promises as well.

We will promise to support Zachary in his life in Christ.

We will promise to introduce Zachary to Jesus and to show him by our lives, who Jesus is

We will promise to reveal to Zachary a God who seeks the lost, a God who dines with outcasts, a God who is extravagant in mercy.

We will promise to show Zachary how to be extravagant in our gratitude.

We will promise to show Zachary how to live as a saint.

How to live that as those whom Jesus seeks and finds.

How to live as sinners, to whom Jesus brings the fullness of life.

How to live lives that are extravagantly grateful.