

Ten years ago my mother died. As I have been preparing to preach on this All Saints Day, I have found myself thinking of her. Maybe for these last years she has been asleep in death, awaiting the last trumpet when Christ shall call her forth to stand before his judgement seat. If so then for her these last ten years have been part of that time that is not time, part of the instant between the falling asleep at night and eyes opening to see the light of morning.

But maybe it has been for her as other portions of scripture ~~seem to~~ suggest already the saints are gathered around the throne of God. If so, maybe she has seen.

First there was her mother-in-law's death, shortly after her own. And my daughter Katie's birth. Did she witness my father's grief, his desperate need for companionship, his remarrying, his dying a month later? Was she witness to my thyroid disease, how ~~hard~~ ^{hard} was then on Sue and all those around me. ^{my children} Did she see our fear as we struggled with Sue's ~~ix~~ illness, our anger as friends abandoned us? Was she a witness to her own father having his legs amputated, first one, then the other? Has ~~she~~ known his thoughts, as he waits to die in a nursing home?

Was she able to see my despair when friends would not stand with me, when those I had taught the Christian faith turned against me?

Has she ~~watched~~ heard every sharp word spoken to my children, felt their pain when they speak and their father does not listen?

Has she seen our joy over accomplishments, and love growing, and children growing too? Has she wondered when days pass and I do not stop to pray, too busy to talk with my heavenly father?

Has she seen life as it has been lived, that is my question. Surely if she is conscious, ~~if~~ ~~that~~ the love she had for her family continues. And seeing things as they are must ~~be~~ ^{be} pin her terribly.

We speak of rest, of peace, of an end to the anxieties that so plague us

in life when death comes. Certainly death releases us from hunger, and pain, and sin, but does it release us from love? In First John we read, "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

We shall be like him, In appearance, in power? No, I am certain that John is telling us that we shall be like Christ in love.

Love never ends, Paul tells us. love is eternal. Prophecy and knowledge and even this world will pass away but love shall endure.

So how can those who look down upon us have any peace? Or rest? How can the saints of God see a child named Amy be kidnapped, witness the anguish of her parents, of a whole community and know any peace?

They have seen God. Chrystal cities and chrystal fountains, the tree of life with its twelve fruits, gold and jewels, these are not the glory of the holy city, but its glory is the one who is its light. They shall see his face was that most precious promise that we heard this morning.

The saints of God know peace, for they have seen the face of him who holds the future. They have seen the face of him who brought Jesus through the cross and the grave and raised him up to new and endless life. They know that whatever our trials and struggles now, that God will at the last have his way. In that is rest and peace.

This is the rest and peace to which we are called already. Faith. God is our refuge and strength, says the psalmist, therefore we will not fear thought the earth should change, though the mountains, though the mountains shall shake in the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. *we will not fear, God is our refuge and strength.*
~~There is a very present help in trouble.~~
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On earth, as in heaven it is the same. We can face tomorrow, enduring the pain and suffering of those we love, for we have seen God's love and power. We on earth have beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We walk by faith. *In his presence*
The saints of God have seen him face to face, they are at peace.

As Jesus said, And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

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All Saints Sunday. Sometimes Christians have talked about the saints. Sometimes Christians have focused on the words and the works of those who have lived before us. Butxaxxkhisxdayxaxdaxakwayxaxkaxxax But the saints of God in heaven and on earth are those with nothing of their own, who count on God for everything. Today, tomorrow, forever.