

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
All Saints' Sunday, All Souls Day
November 6, 2016
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“Once upon a time there was a king who ruled a small kingdom. It was not a very big kingdom and it wasn't really known for any of its resources or people. But the king did have a diamond, a great perfect diamond that had been in his family for generations. He kept it on display for all to see and appreciate. People came from all over the country to admire it and gaze at it . . .

And then one day a servant came to the king with the news that, although no one had touched the diamond, for it was guarded night and day, the diamond was cracked. The king ran to see, and sure enough there was a crack right through the middle of the diamond.

Immediately he summoned all the jewelers of the land and had them look at the diamond. One jeweler after another examined the diamond and they all gave the same bad news to the king: the diamond was useless; it was irredeemably flawed. The king was crushed.

Then out of nowhere came an old man who claimed to be a jeweler. He asked to see the diamond. After examining it, he looked up and confidently told the king, ‘I can fix it. In fact, I can make it better than it was before.’ The king was shocked and a bit leery. The old man said, ‘Give me the jewel, and in a week I'll bring it back fixed.’ Now the king was not about to let the stone out of his sight, even if it was ruined, so he gave the old man a room, all the tools and food and drink he needed and he waited. The whole kingdom waited. It was a long week.

At the end of the week the old man appeared with the stone in his hand and gave it to the king. The king couldn't believe his eyes. It was magnificent. The old man had fixed it, and he had made it even better than it was before! He had used the crack that ran through the middle of the stone as a stem and carved an intricate, full-blown rose, leaves, and thorns into the diamond. It was exquisite.

The king was overjoyed and offered the old man half his kingdom for he had taken something beautiful and perfect and improved upon it! The old man refused, saying, ‘I didn’t do that at all. What I did was to take something flawed and cracked at its heart and turn it into something beautiful.’” (Megan McKenna, Parables: The Arrows of God)

Today is the day that we celebrate the Sunday after All Saints Day and today is the day that we celebrate All Souls Day. So today when we start the celebration of Holy Eucharist we will pause to remember those who have died. In a few minutes we will pray the names of your loved ones who have died, the names that are on this amazing chain that is hanging up by our altar. Today is the day that we each, individually, the day that we each remember our loved ones – grandparents, parents, spouses, children, brothers and sisters, friends, today is the day that we remember our loved ones who have died.

Some of these people were, like the diamond, some of them were perfect, they were perfect saints. That may be true. But my guess is that most were not. Most were flawed and, like the diamond, most were cracked in one way or another. However, it seems that when we remember people after they have died, it seems that when we remember people on All Saints’ Day and on All Souls Day, it seems that we remember them as being perfect saints, we remember them as being quite beautiful. How does this happen? How is it that those who we have lived with, and, yes, even some of the capital letter “S” saints, how is it that those who we know were cracked and flawed in various ways, how do they become perfect and exquisite after death?

When the old man saw the beauty that existed in the cracks and flaws of that damaged diamond it was as though he was seeing that diamond through God’s eyes, he was seeing it through the eyes of love. And through the eyes of love he saw the tremendous possibility that existed within that flawed diamond. When people that we love die, we are able to see them through God’s eyes as well. We are able to see beyond the cracks and the flaws and see what was lovable, we are able to see only the ways that they loved us and we loved them. It is through the eyes of love that we are able to see them as perfect saints.

That is the incredible gift of All Saints’ Day, the gift of All Souls Day. The promise that comes for each of us is that, even if we are flawed and cracked, the promise is that we can be saints, too, if only we will love. We do not

have to be perfect, we do not have to be flawless. What we do have to do is to love and to be loved. Through our love, God will work with the cracks and the flaws and will create something quite beautiful. Imagine what that might mean for our country, for our world, imagine if we all looked through the eyes of love. We would see something quite beautiful, exquisite, magnificent. And if there was ever a time when the world needed love, it is now.

So, as we go about our individual ways today, maybe even humming the familiar tune, "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God," go remembering that God will use our love, the love that we offer and the love that we receive, God will use our love to make each of us perfect saints and then, there will be no limit to what we can do.