SERMONS AT SAINT MARK'S

THE VERY REV. STEVEN L. THOMASON, DEAN AND RECTOR
THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS (transferred), OCTOBER 29, 2025
DANIEL 7:1-3, 15-18; PSALM 149; EPHESIANS 1:11-23; LUKE 6:20-31

THE IMAGINATIVE WORK OF SAINTS

Note: Twice yearly we gather in the cathedral crypt, in the Chapel of the Resurrection, where the Saint Mark's Columbarium is, with the ashes of our loved ones' in the niches around us, to consider the mystical mercies of God who embraces us in this life and the next.

We gather in this sacred chapel, air thick with memories and hearts heavy with an amalgam of emotions. Joy and grief are the twin palettes of love, and we who gather here today—we are drawn here for love.

We hold this special service in the spring, just after Easter Day, when we remember that nothing can separate

us from the love of God, not even death. Resurrection life is real and forever.

And we return again in the fall, on the cusp of All Saints Day, when we remember those whom we love but see no longer.

All Saints' Day is a Feast of the Imagination. Along with its shadow-side partner, All Hallows' Eve, this is a stretch of days drenched in imaginative wonderings across time and space and into the mysterious depths of the universe that are conjured in our minds.

Fred Buechner said: "Imagining is perhaps as close as humans get to creating something out of nothing the way God is said to."[i] It is our work, our play—it is what is revealed at the nexus between work and play, between good and evil, between life and death, between our three-pound brain and the weight of the entire universe of possibility. And today we are invited into that cosmic connection once more.

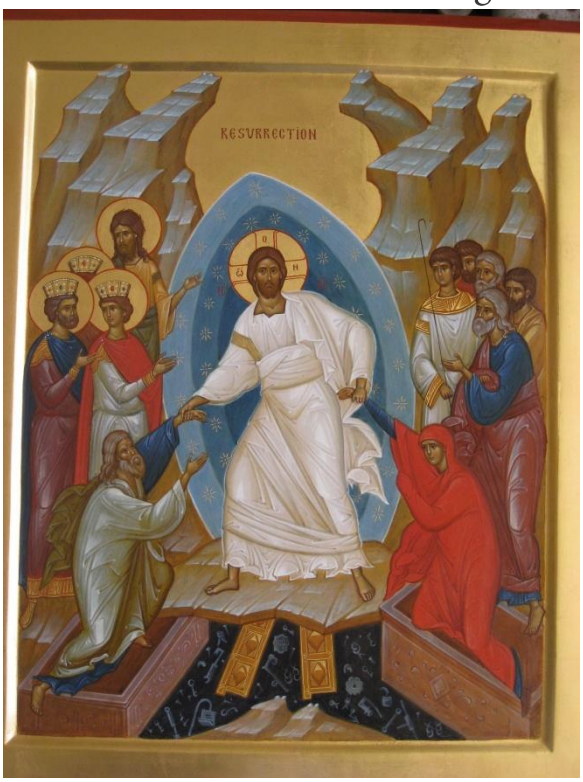
Someone once told me the best costume for Halloween is the one that represents what frightens you the most. And it is by naming the fear that we call it out. One of our daughters had that phase in early childhood when bedtime meant dark things awoke in her room and began stirring. Her priest told her to name it, call it out, and tell it to go away. He taught her to say it demonstratively, with gusto. Ghost, get on out of here!

It worked for her, even as we lay in the next room giggling at the prospect of it all.

Children know how to dream, their imaginations are intact, bright, keen to the possibilities, until we teach them to tamp it down. We teach them that dreaming is kid's play, and in time they leave it behind and forget how to name their greatest joys and greatest fears.

Barbara Brown Taylor says that "dreamers have fallen upon hard times… we belong to a people whose sense of reality is much more

limited… Only saints and children still believe their dreams will come true. The rest of us are adults… orienting to facts that constrain our world into objectified control.



But this gathering in this space reminds us there is another way.

We dream with God today of a world that lashes heaven and earth together and pulls them a bit closer so we can touch and be touched by the goodness and know it to be true.

Can you hear the saints singing in heaven for you? Can you feel the pulse of air touch your face and know it has been moving toward you, toward this moment with you since the beginning of time? Can you conceive of a universe so intimate that God assures us—nothing is lost, no one is lost. Ever. Can you see that resurrection icon as the invitation from Jesus to arise and be with me? Forever.

Gathering here is designed to unbind us from the shackles of certainty, it unleashes our imaginations from the cold dark tomb, and says, come out, come out, dream, dream with me that we are in this together. Be named by God as one of the saints, the dreamers of this world, and know that you are not alone. There's a whole cloud of witnesses around us. Always.

This day we declare that we stand with the saints in heaven and on earth, across time and space, with one another, and dream God's dream for you and me, and the whole world, and know it is not a fantasy, but a

right, good and joyful thing unfolding this very moment into God's consummate love. Forever.

And for that may God's holy name be praised. Amen.

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[i] As cited by Robin Meyers, http://day1.org/1015-taking_time_to_look

SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

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