

All Saint's Sunday
Luke 19:1-10
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What is a saint? Based on the story from Luke this morning about Zacchaeus, we might say a saint is anyone who welcomes the love and acceptance of Jesus and extends the same to others. Zacchaeus certainly did both.

Zacchaeus became a saint the day Jesus called him out of the sycamore tree and Jesus invited himself to his house. Being accepted, when all other people except his family and a few associates in the tax collecting field despised him, obviously changed his life.

Jesus was unique in that he welcomed sinners instead of ostracizing them and steering clear of them. Saints act like Jesus exhibiting the love of God.

This morning, on this All Saints' Day Sunday, I'd like you to think of a person in your life that loved and accepted you without reservation and/or someone who was devoted to the care of the less fortunate. In a moment, you will be invited to come forward and, if you wish, light a candle in that person's honor or memory to indicate that he or she shone with God's love and was a saint like Zacchaeus.

My family's interest and excitement over the Red Sox success these last few weeks has made me very mindful of my mother, who died nearly three years ago now. Late in her life, she became

a huge fan of the Red Sox baseball team and the Patriots football team. She would call or email, usually both, during significant games, and my family has continued that practice. She was my greatest supporter and my diehard fan throughout my life, and she gave generously to a myriad of good causes with both her time and her money. One example from my childhood comes to mind.

When I was in grade school, long before I knew anything about race relations, my mother would invite a young black teenager from the local reform school to our house on Sunday afternoons. Even after he stole some silver dollars from us, she welcomed him back. Years later when he was married and working, he came with his wife to visit and thank my mother for believing in him in spite of his missteps. For all the love my mother showed me and thousands of others, I will light a candle for her today.

At this time, you may come forward and light a candle for your saint as well.