

# Are we all Saints?

## Can everyone be an inspiration?

### An invitation to a holy future

Our fourth picture looks forwards to a holy future, a different future.

**Saint Martha of Bethany** gave Jesus a holy welcome. She was different and generous.

**Saint Augustine of Hippo** shared a holy vision. He was a restless soul but found his rest in God.

Our third picture of **Bahram** asks what it means to **live life sacrificially**, in a holy way, and given for Jesus Christ. His short life is remembered because he was different: faithful!

**This fourth picture** looks ahead and asks these two questions: what is a holy future for a human being? And for our human communities? For every kindred, and people, and language, and nation? (Revelation 7:9)

20 centuries ago, Saint Paul prayed for every person, that we might find our roots in love. That we might discover the power to understand, with all God's people, how broad, how big, how long, how deep love really is. For Paul, that endless love was shown in Jesus. For Paul, understanding love is something that comes from God (Ephesians 3). Interestingly, in his Biblical letters, Paul always refers to the Christians as being 'saints'. He knew nothing of a special class of holy people, far above the masses in terms of holiness. Paul would certainly understand the idea that 'we're all saints.'

Our fourth painting explores two questions, two themes, two ways of living up to the challenge of being human.

#### Do we all need inspirational people?

No human flourishes alone. An 'it' becomes an 'I' through a 'you' (Martin Buber, Jewish philosopher). We all need each other. No one is an island. We are one body, and the eye cannot say to the foot 'I have no need of you.'

Maybe it is true that the people who we look up to, role models or heroes, inspirational figures or saints, shape the ways we try to be the best we can be, to live our best lives.

Maybe this is most powerful not through great leaders of the past or big celebrities of today, but through the example and inspiration of those who we know, who we love, who we are close to.

Through the lives of our friends and family we see what generous looks like, we feel what welcome feels like, we sense the safety Jesus creates, we learn why being loved is priceless. Often we learn life's deeper lessons from those who have walked tough and stony pathways, who have carried heavy burdens. Inspiration doesn't come in neat parcels, but in the ragged desperations of everyday life and of hard times.

#### Look in the mirror. Can we all be inspirational people?

Loughborough is 3116 miles from Bethany. I think Martha of Bethany might be surprised to know that we remember her and tell her story here, 20 centuries after she made a meal for Jesus. And Augustine of Hippo might be glad to hear that his writings inspire people to deeper thinking 1600 years on from when his last words were penned. And our Iranian brother, Bahram, might be glad to know that his life and sacrifice are remembered in Loughborough today.

Is it true that inspiration can flow through any life, unexpectedly? That any and all humans can be touched by grace? Is it possible that in different ways, small and large, we can each make a difference for good? This is certainly a Christian belief: the image of God can be found in face of friend and stranger. This is what we hope to see.

Probably most of us don't feel holy, saintly or inspirational most days. But if the graceful Spirit of generosity, of welcome, of safety, of an open heart or a faithful mind can get hold of us in any moment of our lives, then surely anyone can be a saint to someone. Perhaps all of us can share the love, the vision, the hope of a better future. We can be saints for each other.

Just imagine a town – or a world - where we believed in ourselves and believed in each other like this.

Are we all saints? Can anyone hope for this?

Yes. We can each, all of us, choose to be saints.

Lat Blaylock, May 2025