

October 22, 2023

**Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost**

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

**Living Messages**

In the 1920's when minister's wife Lesbia Scott's three children were young, she enjoyed writing simple hymns for them about everyday things. "Make us a hymn about a picnic," they would ask. Or "write a hymn about a foggy day." She collected the songs she wrote for her children in a long-out-of-print collection.

The only one that remains in regular circulation was not a favorite of hers, or her children's, but it continues to capture the imagination of singers generations later. *I Sing A Song of the Saints of God* (\*#295 in *The New Century Hymnal*) canonizes the gospel writer Luke, queen Margaret of Scotland, Joan of Arc, John Donne and Ignatius of Antioch - not by name but by characteristics. Today will you sing this song in your church? Which image makes you smile? Which image makes you wonder? Which image makes you understand something about God's people you didn't before?

I sing a song of the saints of God,  
Faithful their whole lives through  
Who bravely labored, lived, and died  
for the God they loved and knew.  
And one was a doctor, and one was a queen,  
And another a shepherd in pastures green:  
they were saints of God, if you know what I mean.  
God, help me to be one too.

They loved their God and they lived that love,  
It was loving that made them strong;  
They did what was right for Jesus' sake,  
Lived justly their whole lives long.  
And one was a prophet, and one was a priest,  
and another was slain by a fierce wild beast:  
and there's no earthly reason, none in the least,

They lived not only in ages past;  
there are hundreds of thousands still;  
the world is filled with the living saints  
Who choose to do God's will.  
You can meet them in school, on the road, or at sea,  
in church, in a train, in a shop, or at tea;  
for the saints are folk like you and me,  
and I mean to be one too.

*\*The New Century Hymnal.* Cleveland, Ohio. The Pilgrim Press; United Church of Christ. © 1995 The Pilgrim Press. Hymn #295 Words, Lesbia Scott. Music, John H. Hopkins.