

All Saints, Year B

- One of my favorite profs at seminary is fond of an old story
- Story tells of an unsavory young man who falls in love with an upstanding woman
- And so, knowing that she won't fall for him, knowing who he is, he puts on a mask - and not just any mask, but the mask of a saint
- And wearing this saint's mask, he finds that she does eventually fall for him
- But his rather unsavory friends are appalled - even envious - so they make a public demand for him to remove his mask, and show his true self to the woman he loves
- And he, knowing that his luck has run out, obliges - takes off the mask, only to find that his own face has become the face of the saint
- Been thinking about that story a lot the past couple of days - both because I saw my fair share of youths running around in masks yesterday, and because today is the day when we celebrate all the saints, all those faithful who have come before and shown us another set of footsteps we might follow in - what the author of Hebrews calls "a great cloud of witnesses"
- But I've also been thinking about that because today is the day that we baptize Caroline into the Body of Christ
- Multitude of different ways to think of our Baptism - one we don't hear about as often as some is the idea of "putting on Christ" or being "clothed in Christ"
- And that a shame, because that is, among other things, what we have the joy of being able to do in a few moments, is to help young Caroline Bradley to put on Christ
- And what her parents and sponsors are promising, as part of her baptismal vows, and part of what we're all promising as part of our reaffirmation of those vows, is to help her, and each other, continue to put on Christ, continue to be clothed in Christ
- We all come to the font, or are brought to it, knowing just how unlike Christ we are
- We all come knowing just how far we have to go to be mistaken for him
- But in the font we put on Christ, so Christ can be seen in us even though we're not always Christlike - in the hope that one day, just like that young man, we might eventually grow more fully into the person whose likeness we've put on - that one day we might be even just a tiny bit more indistinguishable from Christ - and from the saints who've come before
- We give thanks today for that great cloud of witnesses, those who've shown us the way, shown us how possible it is for us, if we're willing, to be conformed to Christ, to bear his

image and likeness in the world

- We give thanks that they are here with us, today, and every day, and we give thanks that, very soon now, we will count Caroline among that number
- May we help her live into the vows made on her behalf, just as we do for each other. Amen