Dear God,

*May we live like this.*

*May we see each other for who we are, for what we are.*

*May we face each other,*

*Seeing and being seen.*

*Loving and being loved.*

*May we see all of each other.*

*May we see all of us.*

*May we be seen.[[1]](#endnote-1)*

Amen

Here’s something found in a child’s letter to God:

Dear God:

I bet it is very hard for you to love all the people in the world. There are only four in my family and I can never do it.[[2]](#endnote-2)

God does love all the people of the world. In fact, as Richard Rohr is fond of saying, he loves us so much that he became us.[[3]](#endnote-3) He became born of a woman and was named Jesus. The name Jesus was a really common one among Jews of the time. The historian Josephus mentions 20 people with the name Jesus who were the Lord’s contemporaries. So God came into the world as a human being, with an ordinary human name to unite himself with us, while giving us something extraordinary. Jesus came into the world to save us from our sins, yes, but also to dwell within us – to put Himself within us – you, me, and all persons. All people we like and all we don’t. All the people like us and all those that are different from us. All people that we think of as good and all people that we think of as not so good.

We all carry the divine DNA. And because of that we are all holy. I want to make a clear distinction here. We are holy because Christ is in us. That’s a different theology from that of some faith traditions that say that God is all things. God is not all things, but rather God is in all things[[4]](#endnote-4) and because God is in all people, all are holy.

The fact that all of us are holy has some implications for how we live our lives. For one thing, it frees us from being slaves to what society tells us makes a good and worthwhile person. We don’t have to look like Chris Evans or Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie or Hallie Berry. We are beautiful in God’s eyes the way we are. We don’t have to be the most financially successful in our field like Jeff Bezos or Eli Manning. We are successful where it counts because Christ has made us so.

Another way this concept of being holy impacts our lives is that it means we are called to see the holiness in others, even those who don’t seem holy to us at all. God is in that difficult person you come in contact with every day. And God in that person makes them holy. They are created in the image of God and Jesus has come to dwell within them, just as Jesus dwells within us.

Most of you know that for many years before I was ordained I served as a paid Christian education director at a parish in Northern Virginia. In the third-grade class was a boy with very severe ADHD. His name was Jack. ADHD was inherited in this family; his father had it and one of his siblings had it. It was so severe that we appointed an adult volunteer to be Jack’s buddy in Sunday School. When she was available, she did things to calm him. But, every once in a while, she was not able to be there on Sundays.

This class’s teacher was an excellent amateur carpenter and they frequently did projects where they built the Mount of Transfiguration, complete with illumination, or Noah’s ark complete with the animals. And, on one of the Sundays when they were working on Noah’s ark, Jack’s buddy could not be there with him. As you might imagine, this posed some challenges and, in a very short time, Jack had grabbed the paintbrush full of paint and painted a little bit of the floor, as well as the legs, arms and clothes of a couple of the girls in the class. Some of the girls, of course, were screeching and screaming and weren’t too happy with him. Finally, when he stopped painting he looked up at the teacher and said, “You know, I’m just a screwup.”

And his wise teacher looked him in the eye and without missing a beat responded, “No, Jack. You are not a screwup. You are created in the image of God. God is inside you. You are wonderful.”

God came as a human to be with us and God comes as spirit to dwell within us. That means none of us are screwups. I’m not a screwup, you’re not a screwup, that really irritating coworker or relative is not a screwup. God the creator made us. God the Redeemer came as one of us to save us. God the Spirit Indwells us. And I mean all of us in the world. We all are wonderful. We are all holy. We are all loved.

1. Being: The Power of Being Seen for Who We Are.

   <https://onbeing.org/blog/omid-safi-the-power-of-being-seen-for-who-we-are/>. Accessed through a link on Paintbrush, a blog by The Rev. Canon Ruth Woodliff-Stanley. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Sermons Plus UK. <http://www.sermonsplus.co.uk/Illustrations.htm>

   [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Father Richard Rohr: God Loves Things by Becoming Them – Interview on the Oprah Network. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uC--QfmKyyE> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Rohr in Oprah interview [↑](#endnote-ref-4)