

*I sing a song of the saints of God, patient and brave and true.  
You can meet them in schools or in lanes or at sea, in church or in trains or  
in shops or at tea...*

I love to go to estate sales, and for years, on many Saturdays, that's where you will find me. At first I was going to estate sales to score good deals on things for the house. I also love looking at houses, and I could combine both these interests into one outing.

But the older that I get, the more estate sales get to me. You walk into a house, and it's a fair bet that the person who used to live there have either died, or they have moved to an assisted living apartment.

Either way, the "stuff" of their lives is being sold off—from the dishes that served so many meals to loved ones, to sofas where people relaxed to watch the game, to – perhaps the most poignant of all—their inevitable Christmas collection: lights for the house, Christmas themed cups and saucers, ornaments to commemorate births and marriages, long gone.

And then there are pictures. There are pictures of people I will never know, pictures of families who loved each other, pictures of people who perhaps walked this world with grace and dignity. It sometimes makes me a little sad. It always makes me a little pensive. Who were these people?

Then I go home and I look around my own house with new eyes.

I think, what if I – God forbid—were to suddenly die (Yes, I can be a bit morbid at times!) and all of this "stuff" in the house were suddenly to belong to my daughter—what on earth would she do with it?

She couldn't save all of it—I wouldn't even want her to—

- what would she see as important?
- What would she want to keep?

In all honesty, she probably wouldn't keep much—and then guess where my stuff would be? You guessed it—in an estate sale. We all accumulate

so much stuff during our lifetimes, forgetting that we can't take it along for the next journey.

What can we take along?

The knowledge that the love we shared with our families will be remembered.

When my parents taught me to love all my neighbors, and then befriended a man in my dad's choir, who happened to be black, in Maine-- in 1968—I was watching.

I didn't know till years later that they received vile threats in the mail.

But here's what I do remember--- those card games they had at our house with choir members who were both black and white. The joy, the camaraderie, the respect...

I don't remember the stares my sister and brother and I got riding on the "Scrambler" at the town fair with this man, our friend, but I do remember how we were taught to love without boundaries.

We teach our loved ones every day. We can't *ever forget that*. Everything we do, everything we model, everything we are—it is noticed. And it is passed on.

Now when I walk into estate sales, I try to honor those who are no longer there, because I know that somewhere, in someone-- they are remembered as godly people.

They are the saints of God. And so are we.

So what will live on from our lives after we are gone? The things we pay forward. Loving without boundaries, good council, a prophetic voice.

And we pay it forward to the next generation who will pass on their gifts of Counsel, Wisdom, Prophecy, Words-- but most of all: witnessed love in action.

Pay it Forward  
November 4, 2018

The Rev Lisa Smith Fry  
All Saints

Pay it forward. Amen.