

A few weeks ago I met a young woman who introduced me to her son. He was carrying a book I immediately recognized. "So," I said to the kid, "you're reading the second Harry Potter book." He said, "What's wrong with that?" I said, "Nothing. I'm only halfway through the first book." I said, "What do you think of Quidditch? Is that a game you'd like to play?" He said, "It looks kind of boring, actually, unless you're a Seeker." I said, "I'd hate to be the players dodging those black balls. They look pretty nasty." At this point, his mother, looking completely out of loop, made a confession. "I haven't read any of these books," she said. "I have no idea what you're talking about." I turned to the young man and said, "She's a Muggle." He said, "We all are." I said, "How do you know?" His eyes grew huge and he said, "Ah! Show me your wand!"

I apologize to all you uninformed Muggles out there, who, like me, haven't read a children's book since *The Pokey Little Puppy*, but the point I want to make is that sometimes we dream of being something we are not. And sometimes we are something we never dreamed we'd be.

Paul tells the Corinthians today they are something wonderful. He says God has enriched them in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge. Paul tells them, "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift." Can you imagine hearing that from a saint in the church to your community, "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift." And if you remember, some parts of this first letter to the Corinthians are not exactly complimentary. Paul complains about the factions within the community, their misuse of gifts they've received and their abuses in celebrating the eucharist. This is not a friendly having-a-wonderful-time-wish-you-were-here kind of postcard. This stern letter drips with discipline. And yet Paul tells the church, "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift." They already were something they never dreamed they'd be.

We hear this passage on the first Sunday of Advent because of the next line: "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait -- as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Advent is a season for waiting -- not a pretend waiting for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, not a greedy waiting for presents at Christmas, but a fearful waiting for Jesus to come in judgment. It's a report card kind of waiting. Not entirely a happy waiting. But in spite of that fear and the catalogue of problems that Paul deals with throughout the remainder of this letter, he opens with this note of hope. The Corinthians have all the spiritual gifts they need until Jesus comes. They already were something they never dreamed they'd be.

This Advent will bring us into the jubilee year. During these few weeks we may gain new insight into our problems, into our misbehaviors, and into our sin. We may approach the sacrament of reconciliation. We may seek peace with people. We may take steps to celebrate Christmas with a pure heart and to open this jubilee year with a spirit set free. We are not lacking in any spiritual gift. We have the Holy Spirit of new birth, of wisdom, and of peace. We can have a Christmas we never dared dream. Let us awaken our spiritual gifts and welcome Christ this Christmas in jubilee.