

Sermon Notes for May 23, 2010 Pentecost

Ours is a fertile parish.

This week we add two more families to the prayers for those expecting babies.
A joyful duty, delivering the baby books Nancy Cash makes.
Sharing the good news with Jane Merrill and others who provide a meal.
Many a church yearns to have any children.
We are blessed to have all these little ones.

New life is God's will.

I spoke recently with a person considering the wisdom of having children.
There are many arguments against it.
They are expensive, sometimes annoying.
They may turn out badly, we may fail them.
Worse, the world beyond our control may fail them.
But the basic fact is this: we are made for new life.
If we don't get in the way, new life springs from our relationships.
There is comfort in that.
If there is no other reason, many of us have children in order to see a little bit of us
endure as grow old.

God is the creator and author of new life.

That a creative power that God has shared with us.

New life and birth are a theme for Pentecost.

Luke the author of Luke and of Acts
Both have second chapters about birth.
See them as a pair.
Luke 2 tells us the Christmas story.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger.

Mary and Joseph had received a decree of Augustus that got them there.
Behind it, the power of God, centering them in a particular place to receive the new life
of Jesus.

So too the second chapter of Acts is about new birth.

Not Bethlehem this time but Jerusalem.
At the end of Luke, the Lord had instructed them to stay there in the city until clothed
with power from on high.
Stay there and wait until the Father send on you what I had promised.
An even bigger command than Augustus'

They followed his command; our lesson began with the affirmation that they were all together in one place.

They did and then they were reborn by the Spirit as well.

The birth of Christ is narrated in Luke 2; the birth of the Church in Acts 2.

Jesus, fully God and fully human, born of the power of the Holy Spirit and the body of the Blessed Virgin.

The Church, born of the power of the Holy Spirit and the lives of the faithful men and women who receive that Spirit and live his new life.

Holding these chapters up next to each other, we see that in the power of the Spirit, the incarnate life of Jesus continues among us.

Could we say that the disciples were newborns in Christ that day?

Were the many tongues in which they spoke like the language learning of infants?

You know how quickly a small child gathers useful vocabulary.

They say that there is no time for learning a foreign language like childhood.

Those newborn in Christ's Spirit spoke in many languages as a sign of their calling.

They would bear that Spirit to every corner of the globe.

The good news of salvation would not be heard in just Hebrew, Greek, or Latin.

Or "thee" and "thou."

God's deeds of power would be told wherever the Spirit settled on men and women gave them a second birth.

Think of the children you here, who are a little closer to birth than the rest of us.

They are marked by tremendous energy.

These children do not walk, they run to meet Christ at the altar.

They revel in our gatherings.

We envy them their energy, their quick and easy movement, and their enthusiasm.

If we reach them in these tender years, while still newborn, think of the Christians they will be.

If we claim a little of their energy and enthusiasm, think of the Christians we will be.

On the first Pentecost, humanity was born again in the Holy Spirit

And you have each had your own personal Pentecost, if you will claim it.

For the Holy Spirit is part of the birthright of your baptism.

Your received the spirit when you were reborn at the font.

The natural, biological lives in this church are wonderful.

But the greatest wonder is the new life in the Spirit that we have been given.

A life knowing, serving Jesus.

We are reborn in the Spirit as he is reborn in us.

By the Spirit's power, he takes flesh in you.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!