

19<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) with Baptisms

August 12, 2012

Infants play a special role in Christ's church. Infants compel a homilist to say what he has to say... briefly. We are about to welcome four infants into the Christian community. In effect we are saying to these young boys: Like it or not, you are being initiated into our community. You will become part of God's people.

We are proud to call ourselves a community of faith, a community of hope, a community of love. But we are all in some measure still faithless, hopeless, loveless. On the basis of Christ's own command, we call ourselves a community of love. This is what we should be, but so often are not.

And yet the community to which we welcome these young boys is not just another sin-ridden establishment. There is a Presence here that makes us better than we are. A Presence that is awfully real because it is a Person, a living, pulsing, risen Person. Here we find Jesus. Because we are already gathered together in his name, Jesus is present in the proclaimed Word and in the Bread he gives to us.

I joy in this church, this living, throbbing people of God. Despite all our contradictions, I experience here a community of *love*. For all of our institutional challenges, I find here a tradition of *reason*. For all of our problems, I breathe here an air of *freedom*. For all the fear of sex, I discover here the redemption of my *body*. In an age so inhuman, I touch here tears of *compassion*. In a world so grim and humorless, I share here rich *joy*. In the midst of death, I hear in the church stress on *life*. I sense here the presence of God.

Dear parents and godparents, family and friends, visitors and parishioners, I pray that the life of these infants within this community will rival mine.

Paul A. Magnano

Pastor