

“A Right and Good Thing”

Baptism Homily for Evelyn Alexandra Anderson

Today is a very special day. It is not often in the midst of Ordinary Time that we get to welcome a child into the household of God. Yet, that is what we will do today as we baptize Evelyn Alexandra Anderson.

It is also not often that I focus our attention exclusively on the Psalm appointed for the day in my homily. Yet, that is what I want to do for the sake of Evelyn, her parents and for all of us.

As I was pondering this psalm it occurred to me that many of us go through life distracted by our work, worries, responsibilities, and trials. Some endure a daily diet of despair, hopelessness, anger, fear, loneliness, and the absence of dignity. We are so distracted that we have little if any time to focus on God. Our struggles are so plentiful and so profound that we end up taking for granted the wonders of God. We in the global west expect plentiful food to be available. We assume our car will still be in the parking lot at the end of the day. We expect the house will provide safety from the elements and comfort when come home after our daily travels and errands. We expect the sun to rise and set and the sky, and the moon, sun and stars to be there even if we do not look at them.

Often it is only when the norms of life and the necessities of our existence are disrupted that we give a thought to them. And when they are disrupted we find ourselves asking, “God, why me?” as if these disruptions affect no one but ourselves. It should be obvious that nothing in this life is permanent and that our good fortune can change to bad in the blink of an eye.

Rather than letting disruption jar us awake only to ask “Why me?” we can engage with God. Psalm 146 or the other praise and thanksgiving Psalms show us the way. Perhaps we think that this is not necessary give that we praise God on Sunday, but compare this relationship to other relationships in your life. If we only told our beloved or our children that we loved them once a week they might not believe us. How would you feel if you only heard your beloved say “I love you” once a week? You might feel unloved and suspect the other of just going through the motions.

Also, each Sunday during the Eucharistic Prayer we say “it is right to give God thanks and praise.” If it is so right and good and joyful what limits us to just saying it on Sunday. True it is the Lord’s Day, but truly since God spent the other six creating us and the world they also belong to God.

When we offer our thanks and praise to God we realize too that we are not on our own. We remind ourselves of our utter dependence on the God who created us, redeemed us and sustains us every day. We remind ourselves that God walks with us all the days of our lives. We can find respite in sharing our burdens and responsibilities knowing that it is not all up to us. When we give thanks and praise, we claim our place in a partnership with God that lasts from before our birth to our death and beyond into larger life.

Evelyn, today as you are baptized you will experience something that none of the rest of us will. Like Jesus you will hear as you come up out of the water the words, “You are my beloved, with you I am well pleased.” Carry those words in your heart all

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The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year C
8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
September 25, 2022

of the days of your life. Treasure them and treasure the relationship that you have been invited into with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Praise and thank God each day for all that God has given you. Do not let the world distract you from the best and most important relationship anyone can have. One that is without judgment, supportive, blessing, nurturing, and sustaining. It is the great gift of God's love. For, as it is written in Psalm 17 you are the apple of God's eye. You will remain that forever and God shelters you under his wings like a mother hen.

Evelyn you are blessed and a blessing for ever and ever. You are sealed by baptism as God's own now and always. Never forget it.