

BAPTISM: A BIG ALLELUIA

Adeline Whitney

Prince of Peace Church Sterling, CO

10-24-2010

“You have been born anew, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” 1 Peter 1:23 RSV

Dear Adeline,

You won't remember today, but this day is different from any other in your life. This day is central for your life. This day defines and determines your life eternally. This day you are baptized.

Baptism means you are God's child, and no one else's. You did not choose God--today God chooses you, and you will spend the rest of your life coming to terms with all the implications of being chosen. You will share your life with Mike and Tina. You will share your life with brothers and sisters in Christ whom you will come to know and love, but you will belong to God – both primarily and ultimately.

Baptism means you are a member of the Body of Christ, and that means you have rights and obligations. You have the right to know you are loved no matter what you do or who you become. You are loved, unconditionally, and you have the obligation to love others, including those who are different from you—in station of life, from another country, speaking another language, in another color of skin. Be a loving woman, Adeline, for that is Christ-like. You have the right to feed on the Body and Blood for your strength and your sustenance. For it is here when you don't see Jesus present with you at other times, that you will recognize Jesus present in your brothers and sisters in Christ, in the breaking of the bread. As you are fed, Adeline, you have the obligation to feed others. You have the right to claim and use a faithful community. Call them to help you when you need them. That's your privilege because of today. You have the obligation to be faithful to that community in turn.

Adeline, child of God, you are chosen, *and* you are called. You are called to be faithful to the love that has been bestowed upon you—God’s and ours. You are called to be joyful and to be as fully you as you can be. You are called to use your gifts and talents to the glory of God in this world. God is about to make you a little Christ, and you are called to participate in Christ’s ministry of reconciliation of all God’s children to Himself.

Adeline, for every cross, you are given an Easter; for every death, you are given life; and for every sin, forgiveness; for every ‘owie’, an Alleluia.

You are called to live abundantly and to celebrate life. You are called to do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly, peacefully, lovingly, and thankfully with your God and your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are called to bring others into the new life into which you are baptized today.

You won’t remember today, Adeline, but you will live it, and we will help. I pray you will grow to be on great big Alleluia from head to toe!

Be at peace, Adeline. God is with you, and God has richly blessed you.

The Rev. Thomas A. Neyland
Supply Priest