

Second Hand Preacher

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 2, 2017

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

I love the sacrament of baptism. Mostly it is water and babies; what's not to love. This young child is already part of a loving family. The parents and Godparents are witnessing for this child an entrance into the Catholic Church. This is an amazing thing for all in attendance. Everyone there renews their baptismal promises just before the child is baptized by water and the Holy Spirit. Baptism occurs when there is a reasonable chance that this child will be raised in the faith. The child becomes part of a bigger family that includes the communion of the saints.

St. Paul makes the connection between our baptism and the full baptism of Jesus Christ. He was baptized by John in the Jordan, thus making baptism a sign for all people. His passion, death, and resurrection fulfills baptism in both death and life. Paul wants the Romans to realize the connection they have to Jesus; that their baptism marks them not only for life in this world, but for life in Heaven. These Christians Paul writes to are risking their lives for the faith. Some will die professing the faith and Paul wants to give them strength. He wants to impress upon them the importance of both living and dying for Jesus. This letter soon became a universal letter for all Christians who are learning to embrace the fullness of faith.

We are also baptized into the death in Christ. There are so many connections between the baptismal rite and the Mass of Christian burial. Water is used in the beginning to recall the baptismal water that first drew this person to the Church. The water is cleansing and healing. Next the pall is placed on the casket. This is a sign of the baptismal garment that clothes the individual in Christ. The casket is brought forward to the edge of the sanctuary so that the remains of this person can be in the shadow of the Easter candle. The flame of this candle represents Jesus. The Easter candle is also present at baptism in order to guide the child and family into the light of Christ. That same light leads the person who has died into everlasting life. We are all connected to Jesus through our common baptism. What Paul told the Romans so many years ago rings true for us as well.