

ST. JOHN'S AT DIOCESAN CENTER IGLESIA EPISCOPAL DE SAN JUAN

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GOD HAS NO GRANDCHILDREN

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Text of the Sermon preached the 11th Sunday after Pentecost

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I KINGS 19:4-8 | PSALM 34:1-8

EPHESIANS 4:25-5:2 | JOHN 6:35, 41-5

It is the Passover. Jesus has just fed 5,000 on the green grass. He has walked on water, crossed through the Red Sea, to make sure his disciples get where they are going. The crowds have found him in order to ask him questions, to see what they can make of what they saw with their own eyes. He is finding some hard of hearing, hard of heart, a bit near sighted.

This is human nature. Which is easier? To get your child to clean up his room before you go out for ice cream, or after? To a child, cleaning one's room makes no sense. To a parent, cleaning ones room is the first sign that we are created in God's image. Child, God said, "let there be light!" The first thing he did was bring order out of chaos. So shall you first bring order out of chaos. Clean your room! Then ice cream.

God recognizes we are spiritual children. He remembers the first time we tasted ice cream. He wants us to slow down, to understand to see that we live in a land of mild and honey, to recognize that every good gift comes from him, the Father of Lights. He wants us to understand how good he is and how good this life is. So sometimes he gives us ice cream first. He feeds us in the wilderness and hopes we will understand as life goes along.

It is a lot like the baptism we once again celebrate today. We do not say to the child, or even the family, coming for the blessing, clean up your room first! We do not demand they pass a test. We only put before them the miracle of what faith in Christ has accomplished. To be baptized is to see with your own eyes Jesus feeding the five thousand, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus dying for our sins, Jesus being raised from the dead. In baptism we admit our lives are not our own. We say, we belong to God and serve God's family now. All God asks of us is faith.

But faith is a gift. It is more than belief, it is more than assent, it is more than saying yes. It is trust, it is saying yes and walking out, it is a commitment to seek God, to know God, and to serve God.

Faith is ours when we have the grace to ask for faith, to reach out our hand to receive the blessing, to step out and claim it.

Jesus' response to those who wonder what he has accomplished is interesting. "Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.'"

Like speaks to like. The sounds that come together to make a beautiful harmony are those that resonate together. Those of us who have courage to ask where we come from and who we belong to will come across the clues left by the Creator of the Universe. Those awakened by faith, will end up reaching out to prove what is good, and take steps to love and be loved.

When Jesus says, it is written, he reminds us, it is a promise. We are meant to be taught by God himself. Today we hear his voice. Indeed, he has come down from heaven to give life to the world.

Those of us taught by God meditate on God's story. Jesus points out that, as marvelous as manna is, those who ate it, died in the wilderness. Remember, Manna means 'What is it?!' It is everything. It is nothing. We must search for the manna, that when we eat it, we shall not die. This is Jesus himself. This is the bread from heaven. This is the Word made flesh.

Those of us taught by God see the blessing of ice cream. We see the beauty and necessity of a clean and orderly room. We believe and trust, in word and deed, that when we have given of ourselves completely, when we take our last breath, that our love and labor will be received and transformed. We believe this not just for ourselves, but for everyone marked as Christ's own forever, that he will raise us up on the last day.

Every baptism is a drama, a dance of faith. We bring ourselves, our children, our families before God and ask him to claim us. But in so doing, we recognize the truth of the Scriptures: God has no grandchildren. Each one of us must turn and claim the God who claims us.

Dear child of God. Dear Mateo. Today, we believe, so that you may believe. Today, you shall belong to God as he claims you for himself. Today you, and we, will eat of the bread of heaven that has come down to give life to the world. They who eat of it shall never die. Amen.

