

Baptism reflection, January 14, 2018

Glennon Heights Mennonite Church

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Scripture passages: Mark 1:9-11 and Ephesians 4:1-6

One body and one Spirit

Being a Christian is never a solitary endeavor. We're in this together. In the words of the Apostle Paul: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all."

Today we celebrate this sense of divine togetherness by receiving new people into membership here at Glennon Heights. These persons will commit themselves to walking with us as a congregation as we seek to be a faithful community of Jesus Christ. Susan Bertsche and Claire Franz – will pledge their allegiance to the way of Jesus today. They will be baptized. They will commit themselves to following Jesus and to following Jesus with us, as part of our congregation. Yes, we're in this together. Thanks be to God.

In our Anabaptist tradition, we stress the importance of being part of a community. We know that this is necessary to us. Our relationships with fellow believers shape and form, feed and nourish our faith. This is how God created us to be, I believe. God created us to be in relationship with others and in relationship with God. In fact, being in relationship is how we best know who God is and what God desires.

I was struck this week by these words in one of Franciscan Richard Rohr's daily reflections: "You cannot know God the way you know anything else," he writes. "You only know God or the soul of anything subject to subject, center to center, by a process of 'mirroring' where like knows like and love knows love—"deep calling unto deep" (Psalm

42:7). The Divine Spirit planted deep inside each of us yearns for and responds to God—and vice versa.

“We are not so much human beings trying to become spiritual,” he goes on to say. “We’re already inherently spiritual beings and our job is learning how to be good humans! I believe that’s why Jesus came as a human being: not to teach us how to go to heaven, but to teach us how to be a fully alive human being here on this earth.”

The Apostle Paul says much the same thing: “Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,” he writes. You inherently spiritual beings who are learning how to be good humans. “With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

In this body of believers we are reminded that we are loved by the God who created us. We hear the words that came from heaven when Jesus was baptized, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” We come to understand that this is the way God feels about us as well, for we are also God’s children. Together we feel the deep calling unto deep. We see love reflecting love. We see God in each other. And when this happens, we see God in ourselves. One body and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. Amen and amen.