

## **OPENING:**

(First a baptism joke as the kids come up)

At the River, the preacher was there to baptize the young boy, he dunked him in saying: "IN the name of the father.." the boy came up, and the preacher asked him "Did you find Jesus?"

The boy responded "No sir!"

So the preacher dunked him in again "In the name of the Son.... Did you find Jesus?" The boy responded "No sir!"

One more time the preacher dunked the young boy in and said: "In the name of the Holy Ghost!..... did you find him?"

Then the boy responded "No sir! Are you sure this is where He fell in?"

## **BAPTISM STORIES**

Do you remember where you fell in? Do you remember your baptism? Do you remember what you wore? Do you remember who was there? What was the weather like? What did you have to eat afterwards?

Most people don't because, if you were like me, you were baptized as an infant.

Once at Seminary, shortly after arriving, we had this wonderful sharing sessions where we went around the room to all the members of our class and people did share the stories of their baptism.

There were people with quotidian stories like me:

→ Baptized in a small church by a family member (St. Mary's Fleeton in the Northern Neck)

but there was also the most amazing stories.

→ Story of a Young Mother, going through a rough period in her life, baptizing her child in the kitchen sink, "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" (What a memory! )

→ Rick Bauer, this tattooed giant from Florida, baptized in a swimming pool in a non-denominational setting.

→ A couple of ex-Mormons who became Episcopalian and then, in the course of the ordination process, needed to be baptized (again) in the name of the 3-fold God.

→ Then the most remarkable stories from our classmates overseas, talking about

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<sup>1</sup> See page 929 of BCP

hiding from persecution, scores of folks in Lebanon or in the Sudan being baptized in hiding before persecuting armies found them.

Do you remember your baptism? They certainly did.

## **REMEMBERING**

Our baptism won't be like that one but it's so important, and it's important that we remember. That's our job to remember what happens here, to remember what happened in our baptisms, and then to tell those other stories.

Martin Luther, the great reformer, had all these doubts and was plagued by fears and depressions. He would wake up in the middle of the night, worried about the state of his soul and is said to have looked at the mirror and said: "I am baptized!" And he would repeat it, almost like a mantra, "Remember your baptism!"

It's right there in the word: "remember"

We are put ourselves together, we become the Body of Christ, we are joined in this called the Church, by putting our "members" together. Without it, we are Humpty-Dumpty. We are Mr. Potato-Head.

What's the opposite? The opposite is dismembering. That's forgetting, not remembering, not celebrating our baptism, not living fully into our baptismal identities.

## **PROPS**

Memory is tough. I hear you. I cannot remember what I had for breakfast. Our son's baptism was 4 years ago, I had just become a deacon, working for a new church. I don't remember much of it, and I am the one who baptized him.

So that's why you keep this candle and a card, and you ask people: what was it like? What did it mean to you? Why did you baptize me Mom and Dad?

Again, we are going to baptize someone today, we will remember that, by doing so you need to remember your own.

(Close your eyes, think about it)

If you don't have any cognitive memory of it, you might need to do some work around asking others. OR thinking about the difference that act has made in your life.

That's why today Mila will get a candle and a card. We will go to Henry Hall and celebrate.

The good news is this, also, it's not just happening here.

We get this idea from our Jewish forefathers and foremothers, if you have ever been to a Seder dinner, Passover, you know this. It's happening now.

The Exodus is not something that happened back then to Moses and the Israelites and they are recalling it. They are living into it now. It's happening at that very moment as they go through the liturgy. The same thing happens in our own liturgy. "Christ IS risen" the "Lord IS risen indeed" NOT has, but it's happening now. Eastern orthodox liturgy "we remember his death and we remember his Second coming"

It's called theological jet lag. It's kind of trippy.

I think about it this way: every single time you preach at a funeral, you are preaching not only at that funeral, for the deceased, you are also preaching at the widow's funeral. And at the deceased's best friend and at the guy all the way at the back who just slipped. And at your own.

Weddings are the same way, if they are done right:

Time telescopes down and it's not just Mila's Baptism, it's all of our Baptisms.

That's what's going on with Mila today. You are not alone. We are doing this with you and for you.

There is this facebook meme out there that is really funny. Has a picture of a crying child, with the caption:

"It was horrible: this strange person in these weird clothes took me from my mother, dunked me in this water, and then the worst part is, everyone stood around smiling and clapping."

## **CONCLUSION**

This is a sacrament of parenthood/ Sacrament of adulthood. We will need to remember for her.

Every year, every Labor Day, bring out the Baptismal card, the candle, the plate, the dress, show pictures. Talk about what it was like, the feelings that you had as they were dipped in the Holy Spirit.

There are lots of great reasons to get baptized. The church has played around with them over the year: It's a form of fire insurance, you are absolved of your sins, you can leave your old life behind.

But the best reason to get baptized, it's not in case any of those bad things happen. You get baptized in case you are going to live. It's a ticket to an incredible life, an incredible journey. you get to join this great big family, strange family.

Come on in, the water is great.

Don't worry about falling in, we will remember where you fell in.

**AMEN.**