

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost  
July 7, 2013  
The Rev. Robert H. Malm

## **“A New Creation”**

For the last five weeks, the Sunday epistle reading has come from St. Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Today is the last Sunday we will hear from Galatians. Some commentators think this is the most important of Paul’s letters. In Galatians, Paul writes about all his major concerns: grace and law, freedom and responsibility, answering our call as those who know the reality of Christ’s resurrection and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Paul writes, “*You reap whatever you sow...*” What do we sow? Today we plant a new Christian soul, Alexander Otto Cline, in the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Today, we send a mission team to the New Jersey shore to help in the recovery after last fall’s Hurricane Sandy – “*Let us not grow weary in doing what is right...a new creation is everything...*”

Last April, I was blessed to see Alexander Otto in the Intensive Care Unit for Newborns at Fairfax Hospital. I think his maternal grandparents were just a little jealous that I could visit with him before they were able. Alex surprised Jenny and Nate by coming earlier than expected. This “*new creation*” caused his parents many sleepless nights. But they could give thanks for God’s love, God’s blessings in their newborn son, and today we are all blessed by his baptism.

Paul had a great sense of being “a new creation.” In the first and second chapters of Galatians, he describes his conversion and the beginning of his ministry. He came to know God’s love, God’s grace, God’s forgiveness, God’s call. He discovered freedom – freedom given by the Holy Spirit; freedom to serve; freedom from the law. Paul tells us, I have been “*crucified*” to the world. He is free from worldly traditions, values and expectations. And his freedom allows him to bear the burdens of others.

Jesus knew this freedom and he empowered not just 12 disciples, but many, many more. “*The harvest is plentiful...*” he tells the 70 as he sends them out. Be “*laborers*” in the harvest of God’s love.

Alex will grow up learning to become a laborer for Christ’s harvest. The mission team going to New Jersey this afternoon knows they are laborers in Christ’s harvest. How might God be calling each one of us this summer and in the months ahead? How is God continuing to make us “*a new creation*”?

Last Sunday morning as we finished a silent retreat in Cambridge, MA at the monastery of The Society of St. John the Evangelist, Br. Luke, our leader, asked us to return home and look for signs of God’s love. In fact, earlier he had talked of seeing signs of God’s love as Jesus telling his disciples, “*I am the bread of life...Whoever eats this*

*bread will live forever...*” This love is new every morning. This love is the bread that sustains us.

Br. Luke also encouraged us, especially when we are having trouble getting to sleep at night, to just think about one sign of God’s love we have seen that day. Give thanks for his sign, this moment of love. And this should lead us in peace to fall asleep. Good advice for Jenny and Nate and all new parents. Good advice for all of us when we are so consumed with reviewing the day past, “*things done and left undone*” and as we worry, fret, grow anxious of all that needs doing in the new day ahead.

Br. Luke ended by telling us this story...There was an orphanage in a war torn area of Eastern Europe and the staff was extremely concerned about the children, anxious and with very troubled memories. These children who had been through so much had great difficulty going to sleep at night until one staff member decided to try something new. She went around after the children got to bed and gave them each a piece of homemade bread. And she told them, “I have fed you tonight. I will feed you tomorrow...” Then they could sleep.

*”The harvest is plentiful...ask the lord of the harvest to send laborers, into his harvest...a new creation is everything...”*

Isaiah 66:10-14  
Galatians 6:7-16  
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20