

cEaster 4 ~ April 24, 2010 ~ A homily preached by The Rev'd Erl G. Purnell at Old St. Andrew's Church, Bloomfield, CT

Acts 9.36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7.9-17; John 10.22-30

Hi Jayden. And hi Mati. Wow. What a big day. It is so nice to celebrate the two of you today. And, hi Dennis, Sheryl, Megan and Dan. This has got to be an exciting day for all of you. Hi Logan. I don't want to leave you out. Hi Aaron and Carolyn, Seth and Bonnie.

So, here we are ... celebrating the adoption of Jadyen—finally, after almost four years of waiting—and the baptisms of this beautiful, brand new Mati St. Clair and our lovable Jayden. This is one of those times when we can all bubble over with pleasure, joy, pride, and love for these two families and especially for these two children—Jayden and her niece Mati.

I know that Jayden is Mati's aunt might be confusing. So, let me straighten things out for those who don't know the family tree. You might want to take out a pencil and paper. Dennis and Sheryl have three grown children—Aaron, Megan, and Seth. Aaron is married to Carolyn; Seth is engaged to Bonnie; Megan is married to Dan. Logan is Megan's son and Dan is Logan's step-Dad. Our beautiful Mati is Megan and Dan's daughter. So, that makes Mati, Aaron, Seth, and Jayden's niece. Jayden is now Sheryl and Dennis' daughter and so the sister of Aaron, Megan, and Seth. Which makes Aaron and Seth Logan's uncles and Jayden, Logan and Mati's aunt.

Enough of that. We have lots more to cover today—Earth Day, adoption, the future of OSA, and some things Mati and Jayden are apt to say in the coming years.

Why Earth Day? Well, and now I'm talking to Jayden and Mati, because the earth was God's creation is these parts of the universe. Very simply, I think it's important, very important, that you know where you live, which is on a the fifth largest, very-much-alive, planet orbiting a small fireball star at a speed of 66,622 MPH somewhere at the outer edge of a galaxy your ancestors have named after a candy bar—the Milky Way. We're moving fast enough to blow off your glasses and mess up your hair.

On this mostly wet rock (71%), formed some 4½ billion years ago—that's older than Dennis—, millions of critters have come to life, including us. We're called human beings. For better and worse, we walk upright and have big brains. Why does this matter on your baptism day? Because you Jayden and you Mati are going to be in charge of the world some day. I figure that if I plant some seeds of consideration and love for this beautiful jewel today, you'll know to care for her tomorrow. And, I'm not kidding.

My dear little ones, there are few things more important than knowing you're an integral part of a living, breathing system which is this planet and the myriad lives on it—bugs, whales, tigers, pandas, fish, birds, people, newts, elephants and things you can't even see. You are also blessed by fertile soil, rivers of delicious water to drink and seas to swim in, air to breathe and fly kites into.

Listen to these beatitudes—

Blessèd is the earth, this planet of plenitude

Blessèd is the abundant land

Blessèd are the cool waters

Blessèd is the air that fires our lives

Blessèd are the glorious beasts and bugs

Blessèd are the birds' graceful sky arcs

Blessèd are the mountains, seas, and valleys

Blessèd are fields of grain, orchards, and vineyards

Blessèd are earth-dwellers who cherish the privilege of being here

Blessèd are those who protect earth, her creatures and plants

Rejoice and be glad, for earth and all that is her...are One

You see, Mati and Jayden, you have big brains so you can figure out both how to mess up this place and how to make it a garden. Please. Please take care of it and make it a garden again.

As for adoption, from time to time there are those blessèd few who care so much that they cannot not reach out and care for someone in need. Mati, your grandparents, and Jayden, your Mommy and Daddy, are that kind of people. It's not just that Dennis and Sheryl have adopted you, Jayden, it's that they have given dozens of newborns a start in life. Their selflessness is to be honored and emulated. You're a luck-a-duck.

Now, in a very real way, OSA has long-since adopted Jayden, too. And, I dare say, Miss Mati, give us half a chance and we'll wrap you up, twirl you around, sneak you a donut hole at coffee hour, and love you up one side and down the other. And there are two reasons for that. The first is that you are both so incredibly lovable. The second is that this young old church is yours. We want to give it to you today so we can know you'll take care of it tomorrow...in 2050 when you're 43 and 40, respectively. I'm saying, you are Apple Computer stock—sorry Dennis—and you're only going to get better and more valuable as you become the stewards and leaders of this parish family.

Dennis and Sheryl, Megan and Dan, before the girls accomplish any of the lofty goals I'm suggesting, I'm sure you'll hear some talk about God ... like:

*“In school they said Edison invented light but at church they said you did. Which is right?” “I think about you sometimes even when I’m not praying.” “I’ll bet it’s hard for you to love everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I can hardly ever do it.” “If you watch on Sunday, I’ll show you my shoes.” “God, if I come back as something, don’t let me be Jennifer Horton because I hate her.” “I would like to live 900 years like the guy in the Bible.” “Please put in another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There’s nothing good there now.”*

Blessings and Peace to you Jayden and to you Mati.

*Amen.*

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