

Christ the King

November 22, 2009

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals.

Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start.

Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The prayer for young people from the Book of Common prayer is a excellent place to start this morning as our St. Martin's community gathers to celebrate our Rite 13 liturgy for the first time this year.

In our bulletin you have already read something about Alex, Sarah, Audrey, Clair, Kate, Michael, Ripley, Sara, and Will. .

You may even see them on display outside the music and movement room this morning.

Today is the first of four times this year we will be doing this liturgy which officially marks the beginning of our young people's journey to adulthood.

As their Church Community, we want to emphasize the important role this parish plays in the spiritual formation of our young people. Also by splitting the group up during the year, we want to help our church get to know its future leaders a little better.

The Rite 13 liturgy also reminds us that important milestone has been reached in the lives of these young people.

These young people at the age of 13 have passed from childhood to womanhood or manhood.

This is an occasion to celebrate and to acknowledge that their manhood or womanhood is a free gift from a loving God.

As most of us are aware Rites of passage are strangely absent in our American culture.

Probably, the only one that our culture emphasizes is the moment that young people get their first drivers' license.

However, for our Rite 13 students this liturgy recognizes that our community plays a central role in their journey to adulthood and furthermore that adulthood is something that has to be earned within this community of faith.

Our celebration today recognizes this simple fact and invites all of us to stand by these young people as they start their journey.

And while I know the Rite 13 liturgy has the usual Episcopal aerobics up, down, stand, sit, pray, etc....

Mthr Mary, Melinda Mischik and I want this short liturgy to be an occasion that blesses this community and touches each of your hearts.

And the best way for you to do that this morning is for me to be quiet and for each of us to experience this rite of passage.

As a priest once told me, Let the whole experience wash over you. What you are ready for will stick and what you are not ready for will come back to you, because that is way God is.

Today is a day as a church we can say to Alex, Sarah, Audrey, Clair, Kate, Michael, Ripley, Will and Sara that each of you brings gifts to our lives and the life of our church.

And that as members of the church, we are blessed to have a chance to watch you grow up at St. Martin's to change, to struggle to take your place as adult members and leaders of this parish

And we give God thanks that our teenagers bring so much in the way of life and light to our lives at St. Martin's.

And that our young people in important and vital ways can remind us of what life is truly about.

It is not about the clothes you wear, the music you listen to---those things cannot define who you are

Life for Christians is about living in this community.

It is about learning that our lives are gifts from God to each other.

It is about learning the hard lessons of Christian love.

The ups and downs of friendship, acknowledging that there are times will cause each other pain, but learning that life in Christ involves living out God's love, forgiveness and compassion.

Today we recognize that these young people have started a journey and that becoming an adult is a lifelong process of growing, and changing and learning.

As your parish community, we want to encourage you to live your life intentionally and really think about the kind of adult you want to be.

I know that some of the ceremony today might seem a bit weird or might not make total sense to you, but it is our way of encouraging you to start your own path..

Find your way. Begin to carve out a life that will be your own. You still have lots and lots of time and we aren't going anywhere, but we are here to support you, to encourage you and most of all to pray for you.

May God bless each of you this morning, as you start your journey together. Amen