

ORDINARY TIME

Ordinary Time is the season for the last half of the Christian Year. It runs from Trinity Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost) through Christ the King Sunday (the Sunday before the First Sunday in Advent), and is the longest of all the seasons of the Christian Year. Its liturgical color is green, except for Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day (or the first Sunday in November) and Christ the King Sunday, when the color is white. It has also been called Trinity Season or Kingdomtide.

Why is this season called “ordinary”? This longest season in the Christian Year is centered on a change in direction from the focus of the first part of that year. Beginning with the first Sunday in Advent, the first half of the Christian Year is focused upon Jesus – upon an Old Testament looking forward to him, to his anticipated advent in a politically-dominated Israel, to his birth, his life, his ministry, his teachings, his miracles, his triumphal procession into Jerusalem as the announced “king of the Jews”, his last week with his disciples, his betrayal, trial, scourging and crucifixion, and then his glorious resurrection that brings new purpose, hope and direction to his followers – the earliest Church. The “Jesus” half of the Christian Year then ends with Pentecost, as the Holy Spirit descends upon and fills the church as they seek to be Christ’s disciples to the world. That nearly six months of the Christian Year is a most extraordinary season of celebrating the One who is liberator, redeemer, savior and Lord to the world.

The second season of the year is much more “ordinary” in theme and in nature. It deals with the church “militant” – the church, sent forth by Jesus through these extraordinary events to become Jesus alive today in a very ordinary world. It is about the church getting down to the business to which it has been called by Christ. So, from June through November, God’s people encourage and seek to motivate one another to be deeply engaged in the world as Christ called us to be engaged. That engagement includes bringing good news in our words, in our work for social justice, in our effort to empower people, and in the very quality of our life together. What “ordinary time” is about is our effort to motivate and encourage each other as the church of Christ to work for the transformation of the world into the world as God intended it to be. That is the focus of the season of “Ordinary Time”.

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; John 3:1-17; Romans 8:12-17

Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday in Ordinary Time, and is the Sunday following Pentecost. Its observance is of rather late origin. It was established by Pope John XXII in 1334 to mark the transition from the first half of the liturgical year and its commemoration of Christ, to the beginning of the second half of the liturgical year that concentrates upon the church in the world. Trinity Sunday has been particularly important to churches that come out of the English tradition because it was the Sunday on which St. Thomas Becket was consecrated as the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162.

In a most profound way, Becket symbolizes what the season of Ordinary Time is all about, with its primary emphasis on the Church Militant. A chancellor of King Henry II and a layman,

Becket was rushed through ordination as a priest in order to be consecrated as Henry's choice for Archbishop of Canterbury and head of the English portion of the Roman Catholic Church. Henry, who was in constant struggle with the papacy over supremacy in England, believed that by putting his "chryon" on the archbishop's throne, he would have his way over the papacy. That was not to be the case. Becket took his responsibilities seriously, and called Henry to accountability. When, in 1164, Henry sought to bring the church in England and its priests under his control, Becket opposed him, forcing him by his skillful use of the powers he had as a priest and archbishop to release political power over the church. This caused such a breach between Henry and Becket that it resulted in Becket's assassination at Henry's behest¹ in 1170. But Becket, though dead, won the day because he was canonized as a saint in 1172, Henry was forced to repent and Becket became one of England's most popular saints.

What the struggle between Becket and Henry was all about was whether Christianity was to be under the authority of the political power of the day or whether it was to stand over against that power, calling it to moral and just accountability. With his martyrdom, Becket won the day as the church became free of the constraints of the political order, instead calling it to social responsibility. *That* is what Ordinary Time is all about!

Isaiah 6:1-8. The Old Testament Lesson for Trinity Sunday treats of God the Father. It is the well-known story of Isaiah's vision of God that calls him to God's service as a prophet.

It was the year 740 BCE, the year of the death of King Uzziah, one of Israel's greatest, most stable and lengthy (783-742 BCE) monarchs. The young Isaiah was apparently a priest in the Temple in Jerusalem and a member of the royal household,² and was understandably concerned about the chaos created by Uzziah's death and the resulting uncertainty throughout Judah. It is at this moment that he experiences a revelation from God that turns both his world and his life and ministry upside down!

Isaiah later wrote, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple" (6:1). While doing service in the Jerusalem Temple before the Holy of Holies, Isaiah has the vision that calls him out of the priesthood and the pursuit of royal privilege into a prophetic ministry. It begins with a "theophany", that is, a visible manifestation of God. And that vision of God is of Yahweh seated in the Holy of Holies upon a throne rather than upon the Ark of the Covenant, surrounded by alive seraphim (as opposed to the statutes of the same placed upon the lid of the ark). Thus, Isaiah is lifted out of

¹ Henry never admitted to arranging the assassination of Becket, but he did eventually publicly repent of it. What happened was that Henry, in a fit of anger at being defied once again by Becket, stormed "Where is there a knight who will rid me of this man?" Several of his knights heard Henry, and obliged him.

² Most biblical scholars believe that Isaiah was a priest before he was a prophet, and that he was of royal blood. Although he never states in the book that bears his name that such is true, circumstantial evidence strongly supports such a contention. For example, Isaiah's vision of God begins while he is serving in the Temple in front of the Holy of Holies – a place where only a consecrated priest could serve. His frequent references to the Temple and to the specificities of priestly life suggest he knew such firsthand. He had easy access to any king – even those who opposed him; that access was not one accorded to ordinary citizens but only to aristocracy. He seemed to be very familiar with and had influence in the Jewish court. And finally, his literary style is that of a highly educated person – only an education that the royal family would receive.

God's terrestrial Temple, to a heavenly temple where God is enthroned as monarch – not just of Judah, but also of all of heaven and earth.

The young priest hears the seraphim, joined by the entire choir of heaven, chanting “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory” (6:3). In spectacle before his very eyes, Isaiah both visually sees and understands “the utterly sacred nature of God, a being wholly set apart and separated from all defilement and impurity”.³ And he witnesses that holiness as being of cosmic proportion – that “the whole earth is full of his glory”. He realizes that this God is not just God of little Judah, not even King of the whole world, but is the monarch, creator and controller of the entire universe. Therefore, Isaiah realizes that this great King's salvation and judgment extend not just to Judah and to Judah's people, but to all the nations of the world (11:4, 9, 12; 42:1, 4, 5; 65:17-66; cf. Lk. 2:14).

Stunned by this exhibition of the sheer power, holiness and engagement of God in both the human and the created order, Isaiah immediately realizes his sinfulness and smallness. “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (6:5)! Isaiah confesses his utter despair at his own sinfulness in the light of such a holy and powerful God. And that despair is not limited to himself, but to all his people. Although these are the people of God, the nation that God brought out of bondage to Egypt and whom he generously placed in Palestine, they are “a people of unclean lips”. The difference between them and himself, however, is that “my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” and they have not! So Isaiah's guilt is greater for he has experienced firsthand – with his own eyes -- the utter disparity between himself and God. They are blind to that disparity. Therefore, the responsibility upon himself as a young priest and nobleman is so much greater!

“Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out”” (6:6-7). When God reveals God's self to us in a new way, our immediate awareness is of our own inadequacy and lack of spirituality. But God never leaves us that way, acting instead to forgive us of our sin and burn it away. The altar of “live coals” symbolizes to us as it did to the young Isaiah the purification by the fire of the Spirit that must occur in us if we are to be both forgiven of our sin and called into a new mission by God.

Thus, the vision reaches its intended purpose. “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” (6:8) God calls the now forgiven and purged young Isaiah to leave his chosen profession and instead embrace a new vocation, the vocation of a prophet who will proclaim God's intentions for Israelite society, but they will “make their minds dull and stop their ears and shut their eyes” so that they will not “turn and be healed” (6:10). So, because he was open to experiencing God in a new way and willing to be forgiven, it is that the young Isaiah leaves a promising career in the religious and political systems of Israel and instead becomes their critic, standing over against them and calling them back to practice the shalom community to which they all had been called.

³ Susan Ackerman, “Isaiah”, *The New Interpreters' Study Bible* (NY: Abingdon Press, 2003), p. 967.

Psalm 29 is built around the well-known refrain, “and God said and it was so” (Genesis 1). Psalm 29 describes God in the midst of a mighty storm, using the storm’s characteristics as a way of demonstrating the very character of God.

Seven times in this psalm, its author declares “the voice of the Lord” and then an action that occurs out of that spoken word. Thus, the psalmist calls the people to worship God and then describes why they should worship God.

“Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor” (vss. 1-2). But why should heavenly hosts and the people of God worship God and stand in awe before him? The Psalmist tells us.

“The voice of the Lord is over the waters” (vs. 3a), “the voice of the Lord is powerful” (vs. 4a), “the voice of the Lord is full of majesty” (vs. 4b), “the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars” (vs. 5a), “the voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire” (vs. 7), “the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness” (vs. 8a), “the voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare” (vs. 9a).

The Psalmist is using a mighty storm as a vehicle for describing the creative and destructive power of Yahweh. He begins by describing the majesty and awe-inspiring nature of the storm as descriptive of the awe-inspiring nature of God. But he then goes on to examine the profound power of the storm and the God who controls and creates that storm as a metaphor to describe both the creative and judging power of God. The storm shakes and tears apart trees, it rattles the earth and even seems to cause earthquakes, its lightning sets fire, its thunder shakes the wilderness, the wind strips the leaves off the trees until they are bare. Seeing such power at work, “God’s people all say, ‘Glory!’”

The power of the storm is simply a very minor manifestation of the power of Israel’s God who, in reality, has the capacity to create an entire world and even a universe out of chaos. This is the God whom we worship, and this is the God with whom we must deal. Therefore, what can we say in the face of such power but to declare, “The Lord sits enthroned upon the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with shalom” (vss. 10-11)!

John 3:1-17. The Gospel Lesson for Trinity Sunday treats of God the Son. And it does so in a most familiar and beloved passage.

This familiar and beloved passage is divided into two parts. The first ten verses deal with Jesus’ meeting with Nicodemus and his urging of the Pharisee to be “born again”. The second part (actually vss. 11-21) is a commentary on this story, dealing with the essential issues that lie behind it.

The story begins with the text telling us, “Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night” (3:1-2a). This passage tells us three things about Nicodemus. First, he belongs to the Pharisee party of Israel – one of the principle power groups Jesus opposed. Second, he was a “ruler of the Jews” – in other words, he was a member of the Sanhedrin and therefore a part of the ruling body in Israel. Third, he came “by night”. Normally, we think of Nicodemus as an honest seeker after truth, but the text doesn’t imply that. In fact, the text takes particular notice that he came “by night”, and that would imply the opposite. In the Gospel of John, “night” or “darkness” is used to symbolize God’s absence, and of nefarious, dominating behavior by the systems or by people. “Light” or “day”, on the other hand, symbolizes God’s presence and the building of a relational community of justice and equity (1:4-5; 3:19-21; 8:12; 13:30). Nicodemus came under cover of darkness, hoping not to be recognized!

This “ruler” never gets to tell Jesus the purpose for his visit. Instead, he opens with words of flattery (an appropriate convention of the day if you wanted to ingratiate yourself with a person). Jesus interrupts, and cuts to the chase with the words, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of ‘God without being born again” (3:3).

The word that the author has Jesus use for “born again” (another) is an intriguing word. It can correctly be translated either “born from above” or “born again”. The Church has filled that word with all kinds of theological content (“Brother, are you born again?” “He’s a born-again Christian”). But what did it mean for Jesus to use that word and for Nicodemus to hear it before any of that theological content had been added to it? Well, consider to whom Jesus is talking, and what Jesus is demanding of him.

Nicodemus is highly positioned in the political and religious establishment of Israel (perhaps also in the economic establishment, as well – but that information isn’t given to us). He is a part of “the world” that John has previously described as “darkness”. He is a part of the dominating hierarchy of Israel that has made itself powerful at the expense of the peasants. Now Jesus is telling him, “You cannot experience the kingdom of God – the shalom community – unless you are “born again”, born from above!”

In other words, Jesus is saying to him, “Nicodemus, if you really want to embrace the kingdom of God (the shalom community) for yourself, then you have to start all over again. The road you are now traveling won’t get you there! You have to be willing to die both to your dominating way of life and belonging to a dominating and unilateral power institution, and be “born again”. You must be “born again”, become, as it were, a fresh, new baby – living the kingdom life. And that can’t happen except that you be “born from above”! You must allow God to work in your soul and life to liberate you from your commitment to all that makes you powerful and be willing to join this relational community of my disciples. And you can’t do that, Nicodemus, by coming “at night”. You can’t do it escaping notice. You can only do it by openly embracing both a personal and a public life of a politics of justice, an economics of equitable sharing of wealth and “to walk humbly with your God” in my community. You must be born again, Nicodemus!”

Nicodemus tries to skirt Jesus’ challenge by seeking to reduce Jesus’ argument to absurdity (3:4). Failing that, he feigns ignorance at the impossibility of the task (3:7). But Jesus has his

number! Jesus won't let him get away with it. Rather he keeps on driving Nicodemus back to the point that this ruler will not experience this truth until he acts on it openly and personally. To move in this direction is the truly spiritual way that God will embrace him (vss. 6-8). One will not be able to make this leap and so change his lifestyle until he trusts in the Word and the truth of that Word, and thus be transformed (vss. 14-15).

It is at this point that the story of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus ends; he is not referred to in this chapter again. The Pharisee "ruler of the Jews" disappears from the narrative after this exchange. Now the text shifts to a commentary on that story, an examination of the primary issues lying behind that story.⁴

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony" (3:11). Here is the issue in a nutshell. But it is a much clearer nutshell in Greek than in English. The first "you" is singular; the second "you" is plural. Thus, the first you refers to Nicodemus – this specific inquirer. But the second "you" is referring to "the Judeans" – the political, economic and religious systems that are entrapping Nicodemus with their subtle commitment to domination and control of all Jewish society. It is the systems that are not receiving the testimony of both Jesus and the Church. Because they are so dominated by greed, lust for power and the need to control, they cannot hear the gospel. Therefore, not only are those systems condemned but so are the people who become seduced by these systems and buy into their interpretation of reality.

Then John continues in his commentary, "No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (vss. 13-15). What John is referencing here is that story contained within the larger account of Israel's wilderness wanderings after their escape from Egyptian slavery (Num. 21:4-9). In that story, the Israelites had murmured and complained against Moses and God. God, in retaliation, sent poisonous snakes into their midst, who bit the complainers who then began dying. When the people repented and called to God for mercy, God told Moses to create a bronze serpent and place it on a pole, so that anyone who was bitten by a snake could look upon it and be healed.

John uses this as an analogy for Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' "descent" to earth in his incarnation enables us to "ascend" into "heaven". What John is saying here is crucial, for by the words, "heaven" or "eternal life", what he clearly means is not immortality in a future world, but of our truly and fully living now by our release from egoic behavior and our embrace of and living into an alternative community of both personal and systemic justice, equity, elimination of poverty and a relational culture – in other words, "shalom". This new way of life, Jesus teaches

⁴ Most biblical scholars agree that the text shifts from Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus to the author John's commentary on that encounter. Some place that shift at verse 15, suggesting that vss. 16-21 are John's commentary on it. Others place that division at verse 16 itself, seeing Jesus as speaking that verse but not verses 17-21. Still other scholars put the division at verse 11, as John begins commentary on the passage; that is the position that I take in this exposition of the Gospel Lectionary for Trinity Sunday. But whether one makes that division at verse 11, 15 or 16, all agree that the second part of 3:1-21 are not the words of Jesus, but the commentary of John.

throughout the Gospel of John, is not simply a future life reserved for us after our death, but a life we can access right now, and it is a life that has no end (even after we die).

The “serpent in the wilderness” analogy plays into this declaration. The Greek word, “hypsos” means both “lift up” and “exalt”. Therefore, when John states that, just as Moses “lifted up” the bronze serpent on a pole, so Jesus would be “lifted up” on a cross, but that lifting up would be his exaltation! The very moment of the apparent defeat of Jesus – his being “lifted up” on the cross -- is actually his moment of “being exalted” and glorified! That is, Christ’s death, resurrection and his glorification together reveal the glory of God, and of God’s sovereign intent to make “the kingdoms of this world the kingdom of the Christ”.

Now John moves to his strongest commentary on this story of Jesus and Nicodemus. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (3:16-17)!

What is pivotal for understanding this famed passage is what John meant by the word, “world”. The Greek word is “kosmos” (cf. the English “cosmos”) – that is, the entire created order. As we have noted before, John particularly uses this word throughout his Gospel to refer to the Jewish and Roman systems of “darkness” that unilaterally dominate and seek to control all humanity. But here, John presses the word further to speak of the entire “created order” that God made – including those systems that became so corrupt! Now John tells us that God gave his Son, the Word of God, precisely to die for those systems, for all humanity and for the cosmos (the universe, the environment) itself. And why did Jesus die? He died (was “lifted up”, was exalted) so that human beings, the systems, the environment, the world, even the universe (Rom. 8:18-30) might embrace the liberation and redemption of the entirety of our life as God would intend it to be.

The basis for judgment, John continues, is not God’s act but each person’s and system’s decision. God’s intent is not to condemn the “world” (read people, systems, the environment, the created order), but to transform it. It is our decisions -- the choices we make in building our economic power, our political strength, our control of life – that bring God’s judgment upon us. The judgment is that “the Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness rather than light”, and so they choose that darkness when they have been given the opportunity to embrace the Light.

Now the story of Nicodemus has come full circle. The judgment is that people choose to join with the systems in the practice of domination, oppression and exploitation of their societies, their own lives (by “buying into the lie”) and even of their environment, and so they love the “darkness”. It is their actions that lead to rejection. So their deeds betray them, for those deeds reveal whether one’s heart belongs to the “light” or to the “darkness”.

So it’s up to you, Nicodemus! It’s up to you, dear reader! What will you choose?

Romans 8:12-17. The Epistle Lesson for Trinity Sunday treats of God the Holy Spirit. In this lesson, Paul comes very close to presenting a formal doctrine of the Trinity.

The Spirit, Paul is saying, plays a highly strategic role in the life and formation of both the individual Christian and the Church. Father God is our and the world's creator. Jesus is liberator and redeemer to us, who both sets us free from captivity to the systems and to our personal sins. But the Spirit is the one who is at work in our hearts and lives who enables us both to embrace Christ and God's Shalom Kingdom. The Spirit does this work in three ways, Paul suggests.

First, the Spirit equips, enables and encourages us to put to death in our lives allegiance to other gods, even the "gods" of the political (unilateral power), economic (greed) and religious (domination) systems of the world. Paul writes, "So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (8:12-13).

The key to rightly interpreting this passage is Paul's definition of "flesh". We often think of "flesh" as being the naughty things we do or our carnal lusts. But to Paul, the "flesh" means holding to the priorities of the world, and thus the systems that incorporate and even incarnate those priorities.⁵ And what are those priorities?

Those priorities are the need to dominate everyone and everything around you (to have your own way), to use the power at your disposal to exercise mastery or preponderant influence over others, to grasp for the ephemeral security of wealth even if that eventuates in others being deprived of it, to seek through your beliefs, convictions and values to control the world and all the people around you in order to lessen risk and to make life predictable.

Where did you learn these priorities? You learned them in your home, your schools, your marriage and building of a family, your work and the business world, the cultural and social and religious institutions that you choose to embrace.

What structures of society encapsulate these priorities for you? The political system you embrace, your economic system, the educational system, the social and health-care provider systems, even your church. To live by the "flesh", Paul is saying, is to live dominated by the conventional. And if you so live, "you will die" to all that God intends for you and your world.

"But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God" (8:13b-14). The Holy Spirit works in us to enable us, as people who have embraced Jesus as our Savior and Lord and thus are theoretically forgiven, to actually work out that forgiveness in our own lives. It is through the Spirit's work in and empowering of us that we are able to put to death in the very ways we choose to live and the priorities we choose to embrace our allegiance to the values of dominating power, greed and control, and the systems that encapsulate those values. We are able to "renounce the devil and

⁵ Kenneth Grayston, "Flesh", *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (NY: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 83-84.

all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh”.⁶

There is a second way the Spirit works in our hearts and lives to enable us to embrace Christ and his shalom community as most clearly expressing God’s intentions for the world. That second way is to make it possible for us to connect with God as child to father, placing our dependence upon Yahweh and God’s Kingdom. Paul writes, “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption, so that you can cry “Abba, Father”.” (vs. 15)

To let go of the world as it is – even in spite of the ways we ourselves become dominated, oppressed, exploited and controlled by it – is an extremely frightening thing. Living by domination may not be a satisfying or fulfilling way of life. But it’s all the world we have ever known! And “renouncing the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world” can be very intimidating and frightening. It can be frightening because we are launching out into a way of life we have never known and with a people whom we have never embraced before (the church). It can be intimidating because all the systems of the world and the people who both occupy those systems or benefit from those systems will reject us and even think we are crazy.

But Paul reminds us, “you have received a spirit of adoption, so that you can cry “Abba Father”.” What does Paul mean by a “spirit (i.e., Spirit) of adoption”? The doctrine of adoption was very important to Paul. (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). He taught that when a person embraced Christ as Savior and Lord, he was taken into God’s family (both the Church and God’s celestial family), every bit as much as if he had been a natural-born son or daughter of God. He may have belonged, at one time, to “the world, the flesh and the Devil” (i.e., to the world’s systems and their priorities). But now, that former child of Satan had now been adopted by God into God’s family, and truly belongs.

Paul recognizes that if I feel intimidated and fearful, that is natural for one who has embraced Christ and his shalom community (had Paul had misgivings himself after his conversion?). But the Spirit works in our lives, when doubt or fear comes upon us, so that we are empowered by the Spirit to cry out, “Abba,⁷ Father” or “Daddy”. And our Daddy God will wrap us in arms of love and acceptance as God’s adopted child.

The third way the Spirit works in us to support us in fleeing from captivity to the systems and ourselves is to bear witness through the Spirit’s activity in our lives that “we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (vss. 16b, 17a). There may be those times that we wonder whether we have made the right choice. There may be those times that we question whether we made that choice at all. There may be times that we become so convicted by the ways we have lived under the domination of our society’s systems and our own priorities and actions that we doubt whether we have ever embraced Christ and His Kingdom at all. But when those times of doubt come upon us (and they will!), then the Holy Spirit will cooperate with our own spirits that we did indeed make that choice under the Spirit’s

⁶ The Sacrament of Adult Baptism, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

⁷ *Ab* is the Hebrew word for “father”; *abba* is the diminutive of *ab* (literally, “little father”); the comparable English word is “Daddy”.

wooning and that it was the right choice. The Spirit will remind us that God has already chosen us and our choice of Christ was our inevitable response to the choice made of us. The Spirit will remind us of our adoption in Christ – that we are, indeed, God’s own children. And therefore, since we are God’s children, then we are heirs to God’s kingdom of shalom – and, in fact, are joint-heirs with Jesus himself. We share it alike! And that is because we have been chosen to become children of God!

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