

LOIS, A CHRISTMAS CHILD OF GOD

Is. 9, Gal. 4, Matt. 11; Lois Edwards Funeral; August 19, 2017

When I became Lois' pastor almost eleven years ago, she was already considered a "shut-in," which meant that she was pretty much homebound. I had barely begun to know her when she moved to Brainerd to be closer to Kevin and his family. Donald had died about seven years earlier, their "Sentimental Journey" together in this world had come to an end. And, though, I'm sure she missed the folks here in Fairmont, being close to family, especially her grandchildren gave her the opportunity to dote on them, and for them to grow up close to her.

Family was important to Lois. Having lost two sons prematurely, she wanted to keep close to her living family even it had to be over the phone, like with Tim who lived so far away. It gave her great joy to hear her boys talk and laugh together on the phone, even if she struggled herself to participate in the conversation.

Honestly, I don't remember a lot about my visits with Lois, but something Kevin said sparked a faint memory of her. He described how she loved angels and had them all over the place. This was connected to her love for Christmas, about which she had a saying. "Life's too short not to have Christmas every day." When I first visited Lois in October 2006, her home was already decorated for Christmas, and it stayed that way until my last visit with her the following April. "Life's too short not to have Christmas every day."

What the Christmas angels announced to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night is the reason we are here today. **"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."** A daily celebration of Christmas is a reminder that God's Son came into this world to save us; Jesus is the Savior we need every day.

I chose two Readings associated with Christmas for today's Service. The Old Testament Reading was from Isaiah 9. **The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone...For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.**

God sent His Son into this world to save sinners and bring them from death to life. In the darkness of days like today the light of Christ shines on us giving us the hope of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). It was God's glory to sacrifice His Son on the cross. But the glorious death on God's Son became His glorious resurrection and ascension to heaven, to lead those who lived and died by faith in Him to be with Him forever. Now we wait for that great and glorious Day when Christ will return with all His angels, raise the dead and give eternal life in glorious bodies like His body to live together with Him forever.

Galatians 4 is a Christmas Epistle. **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons... crying, "Abba, Father!"**

Even as family was important to Lois, bringing us into His family is important to God our Father. In Holy Baptism God adopts us as His own children through faith in His Son. As God's own children, we are bold to pray the family prayer of the Church, the "Our Father," confident that He hears and answers us for Jesus' sake.

Lois liked to keep her life simple, focusing on the important things. Jesus noted in the Gospel for today from St. Matthew 11 that the Good News of His life and salvation can only be understood and lived in the simplicity of faith. **"I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children."** Lois had simple, childlike faith in Jesus, which is saving faith. It comforted her greatly remembering Jesus' promise: **Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

Lois kept her Christmas angels close to her in life, because, "Life's too short not to have Christmas every day." The Lord Jesus has sent His angels to bear her home to heaven. There her soul rests until Jesus returns to awaken her body sleeping in its narrow chamber to live forever (LSB 708.3). May all of us have this simple and saving faith in Jesus! Amen.

[Kevin said: Keep it short!]