

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost, 23/10/2011, Holy Trinity

Matthew 22:34-46

It is a privilege for us to be part of the baptism of Lachlan James this morning.

Very soon the parents, godparents and the rest of the congregation will make promises on behalf of Lachlan who is being baptised.

These promises are very real for the kind of life to which Lachlan and all of us should aspire.

And the kind of life to which we should aspire is summed up beautifully by Jesus in the greatest commandments to love God and our neighbour.

In Deuteronomy in the Old Testament chapter 6 we have a version of the command to love God which is interesting in relation to ourselves and to our children.

It goes like this: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up".

It is 'pretty impressive stuff' when considered in relation to a baptism, to ourselves and to our children and grandchildren.

In addition to this command to love God and neighbours I offer you three words that I hope the parents and godparents of Lachlan and the rest of the congregation will take to mind and show forth by our actions in the world.

The three words are faith, hope and charity. Charity here is not handing over 20 cents or \$1,000,000 to a charitable organization. It is more about relationships and caring about and for others.

Love for God will lead to these three virtues.

Who could love God and not have faith in what God is doing?

Who could love God and not have hope that God's plan of salvation is not being worked out daily and that we have a part to play in it?

Who could love God and neighbour and not feel the virtue of charity in their relationship with others whom we are sent to serve?

So I want the parents, godparents and all witnesses (that is, all of us) to this new birth in Christ through baptism today to take away with you a number of words that you will be able to bring out and impress on your children, talk about them when you sit at home with the children.

Impress on your children and yourself the love of God and your love for God and others and show it to the world in displaying the virtues of faith, hope and charity in your relationships with other people.

Leave here today with at least four words ringing in your ears.

The words are LOVE, FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY.