

July 11, 2010 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (10:00 a.m. service)

The Rev. Canon Robert G. Riegel

Luke 10:25-37

Good news: Nine baptisms this morning – wonderful, fantastic!

Nine baptisms and a chance to renew our own baptismal promises to God.

Nine precious babies to be baptized – so a very short sermon. More good news.

Now you all know the parable of the Good Samaritan – a story of love crossing boundaries of nationalism, tradition and faith. How did this man come to be so caring of a stranger in need? So generous in giving time and money and taking risk. We are not told. But certainly he must have received very special love from his parents. It does show. And it is our responsibility to provide loving care for these children: To love them into being neighborly and loving adults. That is a special responsibility of these parents and godparents: to love, to nurture, to provide for them clear examples of godly living. And it is also the responsibility of this whole church: to pray for our children and to provide a place where they can experience acceptance and love and visions of God. It is our responsibility to have choirs and classes and youth groups and times for meaningful service and mission, and times for exciting wonderful worship of our God.

Today is an opportunity to affirm the amazing love of God freely given to us all. It is a day to remember that the love of God cannot be deserved or earned. It is God's gift from heaven and from the cross. You know we tend to think that new born babies are precious and wonderfully loved by God. And we equally believe that those who have died are loved by God. We don't speak ill of the dead. But I think we forget that each one of us living between birth and death is equally loved, is equally precious to God. So we celebrate these nine children and their beloved

relationship to God. We incorporate them into the family, the church. We make them brothers and sisters of Christ. And we should claim for ourselves that same identity, belonging to the family, and beloved by God.

Parents and godparents and the church are meant to the Body of Christ in the world today. We are meant to be sacraments, outward and visible signs of God's presence and love for us all. The vocation of parents and godparents is a holy calling. The work of the church is a holy calling. It is to make the love of God more received by each of us and the holy love God more fully expressed and transmitted both within the church and out into the world.