



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

October 4, 2009

Pentecost 18

Children's sermon

New sign out front-what does it do. Tells you what building this is, address, telephone number, what times services begin.

We are surrounded by signs. Street, numbers on houses road signs. Sign tells you something.

On walls of offices and businesses you see certificates saying people are qualified to be doing what they do. Certificates are signs.

Trophies- signs of achievements.

We are surrounded by signs,

In church all kinds of signs-crosses windows, altar. Colored vestments.

In gospel of John Jesus calls his miracles signs. Signs of God's love for his children.

In our lives we have signs of God's love. In prayer, sometimes just an overwhelming feeling of presence of God. When we have a decision to make.

800 yrs ago a young man from a very rich family enjoyed life to its fullest. He travelled, enjoyed the finest food and clothes and had lots of rich friends. He spent some time in the army but the military

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life did not suit him. But in all this time he kept having various encounters with beggars, and people who were poor. He got into trouble one day by his dad because one day he was working at his fathers shop and he gave a poor person everything he had.

One day he was in church at a place called San Damiano and as he was praying and looking very intently at the crucifix, he heard Jesus speak to him. Jesus asked Francis to repair the church. So he sold his horse and some clothes and helped restore the church.

But that was an important sign to this young man. After that he left his family and began to work with the poor. Then he heard a sermon that changed his life. It was when Christ told his followers to that they should tell of the kingdom of god, take no money with them, not even a walking stick or shoes. Very soon he was joined by a number of his friends and very soon he founded a religious order and it grew quickly. It was called the Rule for the order of Friars Minor.

The man was called Francis and the order was called the Franciscans. Shortly after its establishment an order for women was started by a lady called Clare and they are known as the Poor Clares.

All this would not have happened if it had not been for the many signs that Francis saw were from god.

By listening to the signs and by following the signs, Francis himself has become a sign by which god speaks to us,

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Francis is the most liked but probably the least imitated of all the saints.

We have many signs that tell us of the love of god, but Francis is a life that tells us we also ought to be a sign to other people.

I would like to finish with a prayer that is attributed to St. Francis.

Lord make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred let us sow love

Where there is injury; pardon

Where there is discord; union

Where there is doubt; faith

Where there is despair; joy

Where there is darkness; light

Where there is sadness; joy

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand

To be loved as to love.

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For it is in giving that we receive

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Today is the feast of St. Francis. Let us all try to live as a sign of gods love.

Amen.

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