

## **“Spiritual House”**

### **Sermon on Sunday, May 10, 2020**

Based on 1. Peter 2: 2-10

**Dear congregation and listeners far and near,**

I would like to reflect on the First Reading for today, which comes from 1. Peter 2. Notice, the reading has a true Mother’s Day image. “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk,” Peter writes. That’s an image all moms can relate to. Moms, do you remember the days when you fed your little ones? Whether you used breast milk or formula, I am sure it was an important ritual that bonded you with your child. I don’t know which is more important, the feeding or the bonding, but I am sure both is fully intended in the way God created us. Having watched a fair number of baby feedings, I think there is something else communicated in this powerful transfer of food and love: “Right now,” the mother says to the baby, “you are the most important person in the entire world to me. You are MY baby!”

As a result, some moms have trouble letting go of their babies when they are adults, but that’s a whole different subject for a different day. For now, let’s look at this, all of us, as the spiritual metaphor Peter intended it to be. It is meant for all of us, whether you are a mother or a father, a single, married without children, a kid, a grandparent or whatever. The metaphor is for all of us, reminding us that we are all children of God. What does it mean to drink “pure spiritual milk”?

Sometimes when you read scripture texts you think you know what it’s all about, but as you reflect more deeply, you discover additional layers of truth. That’s the case for me with this passage. I first thought the apostle is referring to “pure” Christian teachings, as opposed to false teachings. And there is certainly merit to that interpretation. But there is more to this than just the quality of the Christian teachings we ingest, the prayers we pray, the devotions we read. It is, above all, about an intimate connection, it’s about that trust-building act of being fed by someone who loves you. I hope when you listen to this service or read this text, you feel that sense of God’s care and love. In fact, I would go out on a limb and say that what you believe is not quite as important as the experience of being loved and fed by God. People can sometimes have weird beliefs, trust me, and yes, sometimes I try to gently correct them, but what is so much more important is the experience of being in the presence of a loving God. I am certain of that!

There is another powerful metaphor in this scripture reading, this one not custom-made for Mother’s Day but relevant for the church in the days of our

current quarantine. Peter says we are being built into a spiritual house. These days, as our physical house on 211 South Main Street sits mostly empty, as physical gatherings are prohibited, as many church activities are cancelled or postponed, the spiritual aspect of being church is more important than ever.

Peter reminds us that we are connected in the spirit of God despite the social distancing, despite the restrictions we suffer at this time. In fact, we may take church not as much for granted these days. Perhaps we start praying some more in our homes. Perhaps we make a stronger effort to reach people in isolation. Perhaps we dig deeper into the Holy Scripture, the foundation of our faith. I see all of these things happening in our spiritual house, in our church community at this time, without the people coming together physically. How much stronger will we be once we come back!

And God continues to work among us. Last week I spoke to a dad who is estranged from his children and hoping to reconnect. I was praying for him on that day, because it must be very painful. It was May 7, the National Day of Prayer. He wrote me the next day that on that night his daughter suddenly, out of the blue, texted him and they had multiple exchanges. It was the first time in a long time they connected, maybe the beginning of healing. God continues to work among us, even as we are separated and are getting impatient. During this time, try to use your spiritual gifts as much as you can. Reach out and connect with people, and let us build the spiritual house of St. Peter's together— or rather, allow God to build it with us.

Be blessed and be safe!

**Amen.**

***First Reading: 1. Peter 2: 2-10 (Clark Family Member)***

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and

precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.  
Here ends the reading.