

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time – July 14/15, 2018 – Reflection

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him ... in love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ ...” (Ephesians 1)

I'm sure there are people who think that adopting a child is different than having one who's your own flesh and blood, kinda like a consolation prize or something you'd get off the clearance shelf of life.

I'd like to introduce you to a coupla people. Meet Dee Dee (short for Denise Marie) she's Mom to Lindsey and Mackenzie, a teacher in Pennsylvania, and now step-mom to her husband Kevin's three kids. Now I'd like you to meet Alex who's a scratch golfer, great with kids of all ages, and studying film in college. I'd like you to meet Karen who's married and pursuing a career in the law. And then, there's her sister Lynn who recently married her partner and is pursuing her PhD. I'd like you to meet their cousin, Alejandro (we call him Allie), who's in college now and has turned into a real Vermonter. Now I'd like you to meet another set of brothers. First, there's Andy (really Andrew Joseph the III) who lives with his wife and daughter right nearby in Foxborough. And next, there's Colin who lives in the western part of the state and who keeps pretty busy between reserve duty and four grown kids and several grandkids now. And let's not forget Luis who lives outside of Boston. He's in high school and is the star player on both the soccer

and lacrosse teams which are both state champs, making his non-athletic Dad's really, really proud.

All these people, all these success stories, have a coupla things in common: they're all part of my family, and they were all adopted, but I think you can see that all eight of them have been longed-for and rejoiced over, welcomed and loved as much as any child would be, maybe even more!

Back in May, my Uncle Andy's adopted kids threw a 90th Birthday celebration for their Dad where he lives now in Sharon. All told, there were about 80 of us there from all the generations of the family, family by adoption, family by marriage, family by friendship, family by love, family by blood. Nobody wore nametags or badges that said blood or adopted, we're just who we are, family, and all the people there belonged.

I think the highlight of the day though was the slide show that was put together as a "This Is Your Life" moment for my uncle. It was so nice to see again the people from our family that have gone to heaven ... and a couple that might be in a little warmer place now! ...but I especially remembered the slides of my little cousin Kevin. He was about two years younger than I. My Aunt Joan and Uncle Andy couldn't have children of their own, so they adopted a little baby and named their angel Kevin. When the baby was about a year old, something was wrong. Doctors did all sorts of tests and found that the baby had an inoperable brain tumor. All through that year, my Aunt and Uncle loved their child, cared for their child, taught their child, laughed with their child, rocked their child, and wept tears that wouldn't end when they buried

their two year old child. Adopted or not, Kevin was their child, their love, their loss.

When St. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that we are adopted children of the Father in Christ, he wasn't telling them or us that we had received leftovers or a booby prize. Through the blood of the Cross, through the rebirth of the waters of Baptism, we have been loved into new life, adopted as children of God, with all the rights of inheritance, all the dignity of royalty, the same as the only begotten Son, Jesus.

Is it real? Is it true? Just look at the Cross ... just look at what He did to get you. What child could ever be more loved or wanted than that!