

*In nomine Jesu*

## **GIFT, OF GOD, IN CHRIST JESUS!**

Our sermon for this day in which the Church remembers the Faith given to Nathan Herbert Chaney is taken from our readings. Hear again the Word of the Lord:

*Therefore, then, all of you no longer remain strangers and aliens, but you remain fellow citizens of the saints and household dwellers of God, having been built upon (the) foundation of the apostles and prophets, of whom Christ Jesus (is) the foundation stone, in Whom all (are a) building continually being fitted together to continue to increase into (a) Holy Temple in (the) Lord, in Whom all of you also continue being built together into (a) dwelling place of God by (the) Spirit.<sup>1</sup>*

Colleen, Sam, Sandy and John, Kristen, Josh and Rachel; Al and Bonnie, family and friends of Nathan Chaney:

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

This afternoon, God has called and gathered us together to remember the good work He did in, for, and through our dear brother, Nathan. After quite a bit of thought and prayer, we decided that your comfort and consolation today should be given through the words that were proclaimed in this Church on May 4, 2011. That was the day that Nathan actually, in the eyes of God and ears of humans, died and rose to new life in Christ. The sermon preached that day serves as a basis for today's proclamation.

Now, I am not going to re-declare all the words of that day's sermon. Even so, there were words of fact spoken then that can be heard as words of comfort now. Then, this thought was declared to those assembled as the man in a white robe, (whose mortal remains are now also covered in white – a visual tie you are not to miss (see the bulletin picture)), this was preached as Nathan heard and received the fullness of God's gifts on earth (the Sacrament of Baptism; Holy Absolution; the Sacrament of the Altar) for the first time:

*Perhaps you thought, as you read and heard the four primary readings today, that some of these are used for funerals. While the Psalm, the Old*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ephesians 2:19-22.*

*Testament, Epistle, and Gospel readings were selected years and years ago for the minor feast of Sts. Philipp and James, they certainly fit for that which God is doing here today. That is, through the water and Word of Holy Baptism, Nathan has died with Christ Jesus. [May 4, 2011] is the funeral date we all can mark for Nathan's Old Adam. So, in particular, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and John 14 [are] fit [to be read at] the funeral of that which he inherited from our first father, Adam.*

*Those readings also apply well to the resurrection Nathan received, as he rose with Christ from the dead. He lives now before God in his New Man in righteousness and purity forever. It is truly appropriate to declare today that Nathan has joined the household of God, has been added to the living, holy Temple of the One True God in our midst.*

Today, the Church remembers Nathan really had a short time, in terms of years, of being built into God's Temple on earth. Following those months, Mr. Chaney was moved by God's Word from life as a sinner/saint on earth to eternal life as a full saint in the heavenly realms. You have heard, and some of you witnessed, the historical and eternal fact that Nathan truly died with Christ and rose to new life in Him. Beloved of the Lord, that means that these words have been true of Nathan for just over four years now:

*No longer do all of you remain strangers and aliens, but you remain fellow citizens of the saints and household dwellers of God, having been built upon (the) foundation of the apostles and prophets, of whom Christ Jesus (is) the foundation stone...<sup>2</sup>*

How rare it is in this place that the pastor who preached and administered the sacraments to a mature man for the first time, is also honored to preach and declare the sacraments after God has completed His good work in that same man. (Nathan is, according to Church records, the oldest person God baptized here to date. He and I enjoyed setting that new record)! The anniversary year markers of Nathan's life in this world had passed their eighty-fourth numbering before he rose to new life in Jesus.

Now, they have passed their eighty-eighth mark. He has fallen asleep in Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:19-20

That fact was stated that way that you may believe and know that he is alive in Jesus even now. Nathan awaits the resurrection of the blessed dead on the Last Day along with all the saints in the heavens.

In terms of his life as a full participant in the household of God on earth, Saint Nathan has just passed through his fourth anniversary! On his new-birthday, had we followed a tradition of renaming the newly baptized, the gift of a new name for Nathan would have been an easy selection. We would have simply needed to add and “ael” to his name. We would have called him, Nathanael, “Gift of God!”

In God’s mind, that change took place in Nathan before the foundation of the world. In human time, in Nathan’s mind, that transition took place after eight decades of on and off struggle with God’s Word. Even in the years when there was no saving faith in Nathan, God was faithful. He continued to call Nathan to hear His Word, believe in Him, and become a baptized and confirmed child of God. God wanted him to be a living stone in God’s Temple on earth. God used means – multiple hospital stays where the Word was read to him; family and friends who both prayed for and spoke of Christ to him; an in-depth study of the Word of God; and other people – to bring Nathan to the moment when he would no longer reject the Gift of God in Christ Jesus. From such witnesses, God showed that He is faithful. In Himself, God waited, as our reading declares:

*And therefore, YHWH waits to be gracious to all of you,  
and therefore, He exalts Himself to show mercy to all of you;  
for your EL is YHWH of justice,  
blessed are all the ones waiting for Him.<sup>3</sup>*

That is good news for us too! Even we who are of the Faith often doubt, wrestle and run from God’s Word. God’s patience with us is forever. He wills to forgive. Nathan’s short new life in the Faith, which now extends into eternity, can be an

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<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah 30:18.*

example for us.

Please hear this clearly: it was the Word of God which turned our brother into the saint he is now and forever. As an educated man, as a thinking person, as one who internalized and weighed facts, when he was challenged to consider the Faith, he began to open the Books. He studied the Word. He wrestled with Jesus' Word to Nicodemus in the Gospel of St. John. He participated in 12 hours of class time as he learned to confess the treasures of the Faith. (Make no mistake: Nathan did a lot of research outside the classroom. He came each time with brilliant, thoughtful questions and deep observations about the truths of the Faith). He heard and observed the conduct and manner of life of his faithful wife.

Then, when all his objections had fallen to the objective truths that Jesus is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, God moved Nathan to declare that he believed that which he had learned to confess. He changed his life pattern and began to freely receive God's gifts (after a bit of in-home negotiation). Those gifts came to him first in God's forgiveness. Then God brought to him life and salvation, in the manner which our Psalm today declares:

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
Thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.<sup>4</sup>*

Over the last four years, Nathan had been receiving God's food and drink of immortality. Here, while he had strength, he reclined and took of Jesus' Body and Blood for the forgiveness of his sins and strengthening to life everlasting. Then, as the effects of Adam's Fall built up in his body, he began receiving those gifts in his home. It was through the reception of God's precious gifts, that our sainted brother was continually built up into the household of the Faith. In those gifts he remained fixed fast to Jesus the Christ. In Him, he was part of,

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 23:5.

*(a) building continually being fitted together, [one which] continue[s] to increase into (a) Holy Temple in (the) Lord...<sup>5</sup>*

By now, some of you may be wondering why Nathan's words and work – as a husband, father, grandfather, designer, painter, and so much more – are not being recounted. That is because, for those to whom these words apply forever in Christ, *in Whom all of you also continue being built together into (a) dwelling place of God by (the) Spirit,<sup>6</sup>* there is no need to recount good deeds, works, accomplishments, papers and so forth of a person of the Faith. If they were done apart from the Faith, they will pass away. Since all the good Nathan did was done in the Faith, they were God-working in and through him. They will endure forever!

So, today, Nathan Herbert Chaney has not truly passed away. Nor have the good works that he has done in Christ perished. The greatest of those, the good confession of the Faith, means that Jesus' words recorded so long ago, translated into so many languages, are true for our sainted brother:

*In My Father's House remain many places to stay;  
and if not, would I have said to all of you that I go to prepare (a) place for all of  
you?<sup>7</sup>*

Nathan's place in Jesus' Father's House – in God's eternal Presence – was secured for him in the death of Jesus. There, His blood was shed to cover over the sins of all people. In Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead, heaven's gates were open for all believers – including Saint Nathan Chaney. He dwells with the holy ones now.

Those who remain in the Faith until their mortal life ends will see them and him again. On that Day, God will raise those ashes from the dust. God will give Saint

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<sup>5</sup> *Ephesians 2:21*

<sup>6</sup> *Ephesians 2:22.*

<sup>7</sup> *John 14:2.*

Nathan a new, glorified, and perfect body. He, with all of us who believe, will live forever in the Father's House in a new heavens and new earth. Amen. Come Lord Jesus!

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Trinity X, Saturday (Minor Feast: St. Mary, Mother of our Lord)

Funeral Service in memory of the Faith God gave to Nathan Herbert Chaney

Psalm 23; Isaiah 30:18-21; Ephesians 2:19-22; John 14:1-14  
(Readings from the minor Feast of Sts. Phillip and James, Apostles (LSB One-Year Series))

August 15, 2015

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

*Solū deo Gloria*