

Pastor R.R. Krueger  
First Sunday after Trinity  
26 June 2011  
1 Peter 2:5, 9

A dear friend of mine (who also happens to be a Roman Catholic Priest), once commented to me that ‘you Lutheran clergy make as much of the anniversaries of your Ordinations as some folks do their Wedding Anniversaries!’ And, because of our good friendship, I could respond to him: “You’re right and that’s due to two reasons: 1) Lutheran Ordinations are individual, unlike the en masse Ordinations of you Romans, and 2) in many cases, the Church does become the “other woman” in our lives!” Now my dear wife, Susan, never said as much, but I more than suspect that she sometimes thought so!

As I was thinking of this day, I made a most interesting discovery. Every decade-anniversary of my Ordination, that is every ‘tenth-year-anniversary,’ has been marked here at Christ Parish in Platte Woods! The 10<sup>th</sup> (one year after I was Installed here) and you gave me a small statue of my favorite angel, the Archangel Michael; the 20<sup>th</sup> you marked by giving me a lovely, leather-bound Bible that I am still using as my Study Bible; the 30<sup>th</sup> – presented me with an engraved plaque from the 3 different parishes I served; the 40<sup>th</sup>, I received an embossed paperweight that included that 1 Timothy passage that refers to “the office of a Bishop”; and now, my 50<sup>th</sup> and THIS!!!

And so, at the very outset – from the bottom of my heart, I thank you! Pastors Arnold and Froiland – I thank you! Redeemed and dear parishioners – I thank you! And fellow-believing guests – I thank you!

But now I intend to ‘turn-the-tables-on-you’...let’s not use our precious time here celebrating this Anniversary of my Ordination into Christ’s Pastoral Ministry; rather, let’s celebrate the Anniversary of your Ordination into Christ’s Royal Priesthood! And our text is a most interesting one because in that 5<sup>th</sup> verse of Peter’s First Epistle, he so speaks and, in case we didn’t get it, he echoes it again in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse:

*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up into a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

Celebrate your ordination!

- I. When you were cemented into His spiritual temple
- II. The grand ‘so-what’ of your Ordination

Just when were you ‘ordained’ into Christ’s Royal Priesthood? What is the date that you celebrate as the Anniversary of your Ordination? Looking at our text, the word, “Ordination” is not to be seen; never mentioned. But it is more than ‘hinted’ at. Listen: *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house...* In our text, Peter uses the illustration of each one of us being individual stones ‘cemented’ together and forming that *spiritual house*, God’s Church. So, whether we speak of the date of our Ordination or speak of the date when we were ‘cemented’ as *lively stones*, it is one and the same.

It was Peter’s fellow-Apostle, Paul, who spoke of the date of your ‘ordination,’ your being cemented into God’s *spiritual house*. Listen to him: *We are buried with Christ by baptism into*

*death, that, like as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* And building on the statement from St. Paul, it was Luther who went on to ask us: “What is the significance of your Baptism?” And he gives us this answer: “It signifies that the Old Adam in us should be daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” Now doesn’t that sound a lot like *lively stones* being *built into a spiritual house*...*lively stones* being “cemented” into place?

The date of your ordination into Christ’s Royal Priesthood? It is quite obviously the date of your baptism! That’s not my idea nor am I pulling some kind of ‘sermonic stunt.’ That is a most clear and resounding – *thus saith the Lord!*

Knowing that, it is easy to see why the urgency of Baptism is and has been so stressed by the Church, by your fellow *lively stones*. After the birth of his first child, Luther asked one of his neighboring Pastors to serve as the infant’s sponsor and God-parent. But listen to the urgency by which Luther asked: “Hurry to Wittenberg so that we can make a Christian out of this little heathen!” I heard the same sense of urgency in The Pastor’s Page of our Shepherd’s Staff when Pastor Arnold urged that Baptism not be delayed until one is on his death bed.

When I was your Pastor and then your Senior Pastor, on my study wall I had my Ordination Certificate hanging – but right next to it was my Baptismal Certificate. I saw it every time I entered my study and saw it again every time I left. It beautifully reminded me not that I was baptized, but that I am baptized. I would submit to you that your Baptismal Certificate should and does say the same to and about you.

Probably some, if not most, of you remember those days here when we had Vicars. Because they were ‘students,’ I was told by the Seminary to read their sermons before they were allowed to preach. The vast majority of those Vicars wrote good sermons: doctrinally correct and Biblically grounded. But, almost invariably, I would have to say to them – at least at the beginning of their Vicarage – “Where is the ‘grand so-what’? The ‘grand so-what’? So what difference is this sermon going to make in the lives of our people? So what difference is this sermon going to make in the lives of our people in the midst of their Mondays and Fridays?

Well, by your Baptism, you have been ‘cemented’ into Christ’s *spiritual house*; you have been ordained into Christ’s *royal priesthood*! Where is the ‘grand so-what’? You have been so cemented, so ordained. So what?

I was ordained into Christ’s Pastoral Ministry on June 25, 1961. What if I told that mission congregation in upstate Canadaigua, New York that I wasn’t going to serve them from 1961 until 1965? Then what if I told Concordia Lutheran Parish in Brentwood, Pennsylvania that I wasn’t going to serve them from 1965 until 1970? And what if I told Christ Parish in Platte Woods that I wouldn’t serve here from 1970 until 2002? And what if I told you that I had no intention of serving you as Pastor Emeritus from 2002 until now? Oh, and some of us well remember that one Easter Sunday when the old Pastor Emeritus really got drafted!

But I said “yes” to each of those requests and you know the reason why. After all, Pastor Krueger, that’s why you were ordained and that is why you were called. Getting the picture? Because you have been ordained, too, and you have been called, as well. Me – into Christ’s Pastoral Ministry; you – into Christ’s Royal Priesthood. And your ‘grand so-what’? It’s not my idea but here comes God’s resounding ‘so-what’; His resounding *thus saith the Lord* – *To offer*

*up sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...that ye should shew forth praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

Here's one of those 'grand so-what's': *Whoever confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father in heaven.* Here's another 'grand so-what': *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* And, for good measure, here is just one more of those 'grand so-what's' (but just one more): *And ye shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.* You know how all of this translates? Your pulpit for your ordination into Christ's *royal priesthood* is wherever you are, whatever you do. Or as was the motto for our Lutheran Women's Missionary League quite a few years ago: Bloom where you are planted!

I mentioned that I was ordained on June 25, 1961. What I didn't tell you was that I was ordained by my home pastor, Pastor Herbert Kohn. And after he ordained me, he quietly bent over and whispered to me: "You are now a Pastor."

However, on August 30, 1936, some 24-plus years earlier, that same Pastor Herbert Kohn baptized me and, knowing him, he probably whispered to me: "You are now a baptized child of God."

Celebrate your ordination into Christ's *royal priesthood*. You are a baptized child of God.

Amen.