



Sometimes this whole baptism thing is just about making sure we do our standard church operating procedure: we do the baptism thing early in a child's life, perhaps as an eternal life insurance policy of sorts for some; perhaps for others, just the right thing to do mindset. And hopefully, from the church's perspective, at least,

this will get Cameron started into a life long journey of Sunday school to Confirmation to the high school youth group and coming back to the church to serve on all the committees and the church council, so that Divinity will keep on being aided by more generations of Ackermans and Chilias and Nguyens.

But hopefully by now the church recognizes that not all of life goes according to our cherished and high-and-mighty standard operating procedure. Life happens, and the unpleasant parts of life happen, as your family is more than fully aware of in recent weeks. And so as much as I recognize that many Christians still cling to the tried-and-true tradition of baptism needing to be done for eternal sake and just-what-we-do mindsets, I like to think there's more to it for Cameron than that.

I like to think there's a rather holy connection to be made between God's precious Cameron and this uniquely uplifting text from Ezekiel: where God not only asks the prophet from thousands of years ago, but asks all of us, to look at all these bones: all these lives around us near and far away; all these people weighed down by agony and frustration and anger, all these children of God exhausted from all the unpleasantness endured, to say the least: mortals, can these bones live?

Some would say you need to reach a certain age to be able to honestly and authentically answer that question. You gotta get through Sunday school and Confirmation and high school youth group and numerous years on committees and being part of our standard church operating procedure before you have any standing in the presence of the Almighty God to dare answer that question. But I like to think there's something about Cameron and all children who can very well answer that question; who can very well respond with a contagious, "Yes!" to make the rest of us fall in love with hope and joy and admiration of the world all over again.

Baptisms are often limited to a far-off distant reward of some sort, but I like to think they're just as much about today: about the church recognizing that Cameron has already been blessed by God with gifts and talents; that Cameron can already share the Gospel of relentless enthusiasm over us, of never-ending fascination about the inner-workings of life, of the constant outpouring of love for his family. Today is about us blessing him and his ministry to his family and all other precious children of God of all ages, who are sometimes weighed down by unpleasant circumstances galore, and desperately need an enthusiastic assurance that we can somehow still live with a passion for each other.

That isn't to say that there aren't some future outlooks to be considered today as well: that you, Lindsay and Dylan, Amy and John, and the rest of the family, and the rest of us at Divinity, are asked to make a promise to nurture his talents and encourage his gifts to be shared,

and to make an ultimate commitment that no matter what happens in Cameron's life, no matter what unpleasant circumstances arise, at no point should he ever stop hearing the Gospel that is further brought to life to him today: absolutely nothing will happen in Cameron's life to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus, his Lord and our Lord. It's just that also today, we give thanks that it might just be that Cameron already can, in his own way, proclaim that Gospel himself to the rest of us. Yes, our standard operating procedure is that he gets to that point well, well down the line if he does this and that in the church realm, but sometimes God insists otherwise. God insists that Cameron already has as much Holy Spirit flowing through him as the rest of us. So, may his light so shine before others; not after so many years of Sunday school, not after Confirmation, not after high school youth group, not after this and that; right here, right now: may his already beaming light of Christ shine in Cameron to captivate the rest of us, that no matter how weighed down we may get, God insists that we can live with the same love that will embrace Cameron this day and forevermore. So, for that Greatest News for Cameron and all of us, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!