

*Sermon for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Year A, 26.vi.2005, 9:00 a.m.  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Brogue, Pennsylvania  
Jeremiah 28:5-9; Psalm 89:1-4,15-18; Romans 6:12-23; Matthew 10:40-42  
Ante-Communion Service, LBW Setting 2*

**J. J. !**

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was and  
Who is to come! Amen.

***“ . . . and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to  
one of these little ones in the name of a disciple  
– truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”***

***--Matthew 10:42***

We are called through our Baptism to common life and to a common mission in Christ. As Saint Paul teaches, we have *all* been called to freedom before God out of slavery to sin. However, as today's Gospel reminds us, Our Lord chose and sent particular ones to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven and to suffer the consequences of that proclamation, just as the Prophets had done before them. First He sends the Twelve, then the Seventy. Through the Apostolic ministry of His Church, Christ sends pastors among His people and into the world. That work is not always met with understanding or with gratitude. It would not be possible without the strengthening grace of the Holy Spirit. That grace is mediated, as for all Christians,

through Word and Sacrament. And, just as we all look toward one another for consolation and support in heavy times of trouble, so too do pastor's of Christ's Church look to the people of God for that kindness which Our Lord sums up with the image of 'a cup of cold water.'

I began receiving those 'cups of cold water,' those acts of kindness for the sake of the ministry of the Gospel even before I was ordained, as a seminarian endorsed and in many ways supported by the congregation from which I came, in my final year of field work in a Slovak Lutheran congregation— which wanted to adopt me and my family and make us all good Slovaks!— and on Internship in the congregation from which I was ordained to serve my first call as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in far away Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The love of that congregation in getting me and my family moved and settled in, in welcoming us and in facilitating my ministry there, and in finally in bidding us farewell as I was called overseas was phenomenal, as was the welcome and the support we received in my second congregation, in Germany. Returning to the United States under difficult circumstances, those 'cold cups of

water' for my ministry in the difficult field of urban ministry came from members of the congregations I served but also from synodical deployed staff and from brother and sister pastors.

It was hard to leave those relationships to serve as a pastor in this synod beginning nearly three years ago, but there has been no shortage of those 'cups of cold water' to which Christ gave His promise here. In sharing so generously in our common service to Christ, but also under circumstances I could not have imagined in my worst nightmares, you have shown extraordinary devotion to the One in Whose Name we gather by your love toward me and my family. I am glad that today's Gospel gives me occasion to say 'Thank you!' and 'God bless you!' for that. 🙏Amen.

Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit both now and forever. 🙏Amen.

**S. D. G. !**