

At the beginning of today's liturgy we heard these words: 'This is eternal life: to know the one true God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent.' This is eternal life. To be caught up into the love of the Father, by sharing in the Divine life of the Son, poured out anew in our hearts by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Today Audrey, Beauty, Mike, Motunrayo and Sam, you will become a new creation. By the grace of the sacraments you will be refashioned into temples of the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel we heard that the word became flesh and dwelt among us. God was enfleshed by the action of that same Holy Spirit who will now dwell within you. And so the Holy Spirit will now draw on the canvas of your soul the true image of God, Jesus Christ himself, present at the centre of who you are. Today you will share in the life of Christ so completely that his life and yours will be knit together in a bond of love that can never be undone.

And what does it mean to have your life and Jesus' intertwined in this inseparable way? Well as we said at the beginning of the liturgy, it means eternal life. God alone brings life out of death. On Easter night, when Jesus rose from the dead, death was swallowed up in unending life, and in that moment the power of death is broken - it no longer has a hold over Jesus and can never touch him again. Today death will lose its hold over you. By his death Jesus

has destroyed your deaths. You will share in Jesus' unending life, and so in imitation of him you seek to die to self so as to rise to new life - to make both his death and his new life yours.

Yet as if that wasn't enough! As you will bear the image the Son of God in your hearts by baptism so you become children of God. Jesus Christ, God's only-begotten Son, dwells in you - and so you share in his sonship. You are caught up into the perfect, unending, divine love between God the Father and Jesus Christ - you are truly and really part of that relationship. As St Paul reminds us in our second reading - in baptism we strip off our old self, and we put on the new self; cloth ourselves in Jesus Christ. And so you become God's chosen race, his saints, because - he loves you!

And because we are caught up in the love of God we must allow ourselves to be transformed by love. To clothe ourselves in compassion, and in great kindness born of humble acceptance of unconditional love. We must be gentle and patient with ourselves and with others, as God is gentle and patient with us. And being so loved, so we love - we bear with others, we give to them what we ourselves have received, and forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven. Love himself has made his home in us, and so we are transformed into love's image by love's gentle presence.

Today in the waters of baptism you will be freed from the grip of sin, death and the devil. You will become the dwelling place of God on earth, a child of the Father, and a beacon of hope in our fallen world. In Confirmation you will be strengthened by the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit who will come upon you with power. In Holy Communion you will eat the flesh of Jesus our saviour, and so experience his closeness and consolation anew.

These are immense and beautiful gifts. They bring us life, and help us to live that life to the full. God loves you, and he will now pour out on you unending blessings and new life through his Sacraments. Let the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, and always be thankful for the love he has lavished upon you. Never shy away from sharing his great love with others.

The greatest thing I ever did in my life was to become a Catholic. It has been the most extraordinary gift and the greatest adventure. It is a privilege as God's priest to now share that same gift with you today through the sacraments of the church. I pray that God bless you as abundantly as he has blessed me. May he guard and guide you on the path of life. May his love well up in your heart every moment of every day. May you walk with him now and forever, and one day be numbered among his saints in heaven. May you know always and everywhere how great his love is - for you.