
This Past Sunday was Homecoming Sunday!

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
by Dean Sam Candler**

This past Sunday was both glorious and awkward, full of joy but also touched with anger and pain. I loved being here, and I enjoyed preaching about bobbing canoes! ([Click here](#) for the text of that sermon.) At least some of what I said bears repeating. Acknowledging Homecoming Sunday, I asked the question, “So, what is ‘Home?’”

Maybe “Home” is that place where we fall out, and then we get back in. Remember, despite our pleasant memories of what home is, homes—families—are also difficult. Home is where families sometimes do throw us off the boat.

“Home” can be a complicated place. Some of us may think we have pleasant memories of home, but others of us do not. Why would Joseph, for instance, ever have wanted to go back home, to where his brothers had abused him? Would someone call his family a “biblical example” of happy family life?

Yet, “Home” is also where families pull each other back out of the water. Remember, there were two brothers of Joseph, Reuben and Judah, who persuaded the other brothers not to do more harm to poor young Joseph.

So, here at the Cathedral, we do something else on this “Homecoming Sunday.” We baptize people. We plunge people into the water, and we pull them back out. (This little font does not give us enough room to fully immerse people into the water, but we would if we could.)

Because baptism shows us what true “home” is. Home is where we fall in the water. Home is where we get wet and sloppy and messy. Home is where our family members, our community, bob us up and down on canoes. We are dancing elegantly one moment, and then being thrown off crazily the next moment. Home is where we fall off.

And home is where, when we fall off, our loved ones fall off, too. Yes, when we fall off, our partners and loved ones fall off, too. We all do. Home is where we have the courage to bounce around, up and down, back and forth.

Furthermore, home is also where we have the courage to step deliberately out of the boat, and try to walk on the water, like Peter did. Home is where Jesus fully knows that we will get wet. We will sink. Home is where Jesus lifts us up out of the water. Home is where we lift each other up out of the water.

Some of you know that I was also recognizing another issue there. For a lot of Americans, this country does not feel like home. How can some of our country’s great diversity of people feel at home, when hate groups and racist groups mass upon Charlottesville? Last weekend, we were painfully reminded that racism and violence still seem determined to kick people out of the boat. So, even though we witness to inclusion and community here at the Cathedral, even though we welcome all people home to this holy place, we also acknowledge the anger and pain of those who are being reviled and excluded by various hate groups.

I am looking forward to a tremendous and powerful year here at the Cathedral of St. Philip. We are baptizing and thriving. We are dying to the old life and being reborn into a new one. That new life includes the full diversity of all God’s people. This cathedral parish is a home, a house of prayer, for all people. Join us!

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