
Youth Sunday Sermon – Pruitt DeLong

A sermon by Pruitt DeLong
Youth Sunday – The Sixth Sunday of Easter

My name is Pruitt DeLong, and I am a senior at North Atlanta High School with plans to attend the University of Georgia next fall, where I plan to major in psychology. Today I wanted to share a little bit about myself.

I'm a homebody. I really enjoy being at home. I don't know what it is, because I was not always like this, but definitely am now. My parents, my dog, my bed, the couch, the kitchen counter, even the leftovers in the fridge, I just love my house. I love the familiarity of it, I love how constant it is, and how I have spent my whole life growing with it. It is one of my firmest foundations.

Another obvious foundation of mine is this church- the people in it, and most importantly, my relationship with the Lord.

The cathedral has always been a part of my life, whether it was by choice or not. I remember early Sunday mornings when my parents were barely getting all four of us into the pews on time, and now most of my Sundays are spent singing in the choir with people I've grown up with.

I've been here my whole life. I've been singing in choristers, the youth Cathedral choir, for 10 years now. It would be nine but I started a year early so I could be with my older sister who was about to graduate high school. Exciting for me, maybe not so much as for her.

But over time, choir has become more than just singing. It's helped me connect more deeply with the Word and grow in my faith in a way I didn't really expect.

And it's not just singing in choir. Whether it's weekly rehearsals, seeing neighbors from down the street here, stopping by to hangout with my mom while she's working on staff, or even being treated at the Cathedral Counseling Center when I was a nervous middle schooler- this place has become more than just a church. It's become a safe place for me that I will hold close to my heart due to the different and special connections I have to it. My experience at the counseling center impacted me in many more ways than one, and is a big part of why I want to become a therapist.

My parents always made it a point for Christ to be present in my life, and because of that, I've always known that even if I wasn't actively pursuing that relationship, God was still there, and this was always a safe place I could come back to. But they also showed me what it means to serve others through the church. They have both spent a lot of time giving back to this community and serving in various roles, and I think that growing up around that taught me that faith is both something you believe and something that you live through the way you care for other people. As the youngest of four, I've had a pretty constant foundation growing up. Not a lot of change, and honestly, a lot of attention. But now, with college and moving away from home coming up in August, that's starting to change. I won't have the same home, the same routine, or that same sense of familiarity.

And I think that's why this week's Gospel from the Gospel of John stood out to me so much. Jesus says that He will not leave us alone- that God abides with us and is in us. And I think, looking back, that's what I've experienced here this whole time. Through this church, through the people in it, through the support I've had- I've never really been alone, even when I didn't always realize it.

So as I go into this next chapter, I'm not really losing that foundation- I'm taking it with me. It has even led me to

opportunities like becoming a YoungLife leader for middle school girls, which has become a newfound passion of mine and has taught me so much about serving and loving others.

Everything around me might be changing, but my faith is the thing that isn't. And I think that's one of the biggest things this church has taught me- that even when life feels unfamiliar or uncertain, we are never really alone. The Lord goes with us through all of it, often through the people and places that shape us along the way. And as I move into this next chapter of my life, I know that's something I'll continue to carry with me.

Thank you.