

Getting Still, then Stirred Up **A Word from Timothy Jones, May 17, 2010**

I found myself moved this past week by two word pictures. Each was different, but both helped me make better sense of our parish life together after the flood.

I think, first of all, of the image that came up at last week's ministry staff prayer time. "Be still," we heard from Psalm 46, "and know that I am God." The several of us there discussed it, and reflected on its familiar, reassuring tone.

But I noticed this time something that hadn't stood out so strikingly or starkly before the flooding and its aftermath: The psalmist calls his hearers to be still at a time when things are in turmoil. "We will not fear," he says, but not glibly. For the call to pause and remember God comes when, as he says, "the earth gives way" and when the waters of the sea "roar and foam." Each of us could flash our own images of the recent weekend's waters, destroying and devastating.

But it is then, even as waters rise and rage, we remembered, that we are invited to "be still." It may be most difficult—and yet most essential—to recall that he is God precisely when everything is topsy-turvy. We do it even when we grieve what we have lost and mourn those who lost their lives. And we do it even when we think of all the things that need, sometimes desperately, to get done.

I think of another the other, complementary word picture I found compelling this past week. Bishop John Bauerschmidt was speaking Tuesday evening at a reception for our adults about to be confirmed, received or reaffirmed (prior to his annual Sunday visit yesterday to our parish).

After pie and coffee, the Bishop reflected with us on the significance of confirmation and reception and reaffirmation. It's all about "stirring up the gift of grace given in baptism," he said.

I liked that image of stirring the instant I heard it. It's an active image—not just sitting with what we know, not just letting truths within us grow tired. Sunday's confirmation and reception and reaffirmation, for both youth and adults, he was saying, makes us think of grace once given us, of gifts already given us. But we need renewing, sometimes. And that's not just true for confirmands. I know I need stirring up sometimes—God supplying fresh energy and renewed urgency for the opportunities before me.

"It's amazing," Bishop Bauerschmidt concluded, "what God can do with a bunch of stirred-up people."

I'm going to try this week to keep both images in mind: getting still and letting myself get stirred up. One follows from the other. One supports the other. It's amazing what can happen when we get still and remember. And then let God stir us up to new faith and love and good deeds.