

This morning for our family service we are welcoming two children into the fellowship of the Church in Baptism. As you no doubt realise, I enjoy baptisms. You will also realise that I find in the service of Baptism, in the promises made, much food for thought as I think about that journey that is the life of faith. One of my jobs when I was in Finglas, was the chaplaincy to the Rotunda Hospital. I really enjoyed those three years, the contact with staff, with the mothers and with their new born children. New babies have never ceased to amaze me – the perfect miniature detail of those hands – the fingers, the finger nails – magic.

Talking to Mums and Dads for a minute, when babies arrive as parents we realise, in a way we never did before they were born, they depend on us – in the early days of little sleep and lots of exhaustion it is food and drink and warmth and love – then of course there are lifts, football kits to be bought and washed, shoulders to cry on, someone to shout and scream at, to borrow money off, who is going to love and be proud of them through it all.

A lot of what we offer can be summed up under two headings
Nutrition – the food we give, the love and understanding
Guidance – the advice, the education, the listening ear

These two children are already an irreplaceable part of their human family. This morning we welcome them into the wider family of the Church. Our lessons this morning have talked a bit about nutrition and guidance.

In our first lesson, Peter was talking to the early Christians about the importance of looking for ‘pure spiritual milk that you may grow.’ and elsewhere Jesus will talk of himself as ‘the bread of life’. In our second lesson Jesus talks of himself as being the ‘way, the truth and the life’.

These children are already physically very well looked after and loved as part of their own family – how do we look after them as part of the family of the Church?

This morning their parents and godparents were asked a number of questions – I asked them ‘will you walk with them in the way of Christ?’ and then ‘will you help them take their place within the life and worship of Christ’s Church?’

A lot of it is going to fall on their Mum and Dad – but not all of it – we all have a part to play.

When they come here are they just going to hear about following Jesus – or are they going to see people around them to live that out in practice?

Later on in the service we will all say to Frederick and Sebastian:

We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;
we are children of the same heavenly Father;
we welcome you.

Are they going to feel that welcome in the years to come as they take their place in the life of the Church?

So today, in this Family Service, we welcome two new members into our family, the Church. May God bless them and their Mum and Dad and all who will have the care of them in the days and weeks and years to come.