

October 15, 2007  
Madeline Rose Lombardi  
Nantucket, MA 02554

Dear Madeline,

I am sending this letter to your mother and father to share with you in the years ahead. Yesterday, you were baptized at First Congregational Church by Rev. Joy Baumgartner and me. Your great-grandmother, grandparents on both your mother and your father's side of the family, aunts and uncles, great Aunts and Uncles, and friends were there for this special Sacrament. It meant a great deal to me and my wife LeeAnne to be part of your baptism. I was the minister of your mother's Church, and we are friends with your grandparents. In fact, I officiated at your parent's wedding.

During the baptism, we gave your mother and father a rose and a candle, one as a symbol of the beauty of God's creation, of which you are such a special part, and the other is a symbol of the presence of God's spirit in your life. We said a prayer for you and your family. When the Service was over, family and friends blessed you with their touches and words.

Why did we do this? Because we believe that God wants us to recognize, announce, and even celebrate the Almighty's love for you. This way of doing that has been part of the Christian tradition since Jesus himself was baptized. We also believe that God wants a promise from us to care for you and to encourage your parents in their love for you as well.

If we do well with keeping our promise, your baptism should mean more and more to you as you grow older. There will be times when you will feel lonely in life as if nobody cares about you. Perhaps this letter will help you during those times. Other times will come when you will wonder about the meaning of life. You might ask yourself, "What good am I?" When those times come, remember your baptism. Remember that God nurtured you from the very beginning. God wants you to become a mature person who loves, cares, and serves the needs of humankind.

When you are afraid of the future, remember that God was with you on October 14<sup>th</sup> in the Summer sanctuary of First Congregational Church and was saying, "Madeline is my child and nothing is going to separate her from my love. Neither the failure of love around her, nor the wrongdoings of this world, nor her own wrongdoings or suffering, not even death will ever change my purpose to make her like Christ in mind and spirit."

May God bless you, Madeline and help you and your parents and friends to remember that we have all been baptized and blessed by God.

With Love,

Dr. Thomas M. Richard