

The study of generations has become fairly popular and in-depth over the years.

Generational studies include not only the people observed,
But also—maybe more importantly— the environment
of the America and the world they grew up in.

There are six living generations in America right now:

The G.I. Generation,
The Silent Generation,
Baby Boomers,
Generation X,
Generation Y or Millennials,
And Generation Z or Boomlets.

I've noted for years that neither Generation X nor Millennial truly felt like it was my generation,

Even though I was born right in between the two.

And then I came across an article this week that finally resonated with me.

This article described a micro-generation of those born between 1977 and 1983.

This is me.

And apparently it makes me an "Xennial."

This micro-generation grew up with pre-digital technology—

Landline phones,

Handwritten letters.

I can still remember the sounds of dial-up internet as it connected me to my email and AOL Instant Messenger.

I wrote notes to friends on real paper and intricately folded them.

I dialed numbers on a push-button landline phone and if the
line was busy, I had to try again later.
But my late adolescence was when things changed.
I got a cell phone my senior year of high school,
And in college, I started texting.
Email was starting to become the primary way to contact my
professors,
And online class groups were just starting to come together at my
university.
Facebook wasn't an option for me until well after I graduated college,
As Facebook started out with the rule that its members had to be
currently enrolled in college.
I quickly learned technology and adapted to it
(and in some ways, have become addicted to it like some describe
the generation after me).
But technology certainly isn't all I've known... . .
What's so common today really wasn't part of my early
years at all.
Which puts me smack in the middle of the micro-generation "Xennial."

Now I don't like to put *too* much stock in these generation labels,
And I don't find them to be all that helpful much of the time.
Labels can be limiting,
And we are who we are,
Each different children of God,
No matter what year we were born.
But there is something to be said for the times and the changes in
which we grow up and how these impact our attitudes,
our work habits,
and even our faith and our relationships.

Generations can be informative for us to understand our society and the patterns of people.

“To what will I compare this generation?” Jesus says in our Gospel this morning.

Jesus isn't talking about Generation X or Boomers or Millennials or Xennials. . .

Jesus is talking about all of us--

As generated,

Created by God.

Jesus is talking about the entire generation of God's beloved people who live on this earth,

Whom Jesus has come to save.

“To what will I compare this generation?” he asks.

And he proceeds to describe us--every generation that has ever and will ever exist on this earth.

He describes how we can't be satisfied—

Like those who cast suspicions on John the Baptist,

Who came neither eating or drinking,

And they said he had a demon.

And then when Jesus came eating and drinking,

They called him a glutton and a drunkard,

A friend of sinners.

This generation could always find something about which to complain,

Something about which to be unhappy.

We are this generation.

All people are this generation.

Jesus then describes the pride and refusal to repent that plagues this generation.

Like the cities that Jesus reproaches and condemns.
This generation, Jesus seems to say, thinks much too highly of itself.
As Jesus says, God has hidden these things from this generation of the wise and intelligent,
And instead God has been revealed to infants.
Perhaps because our cherished human wisdom and intelligence can often keep God hidden from us,
Whereas an infant,
with lack of wisdom and intelligence,
sees God so plainly and so clearly.
This generation often can't see God, Jesus says.
We are this generation, too.

It doesn't matter when we were born,
Or how our life has been shaped by the world. . .
We are all one generation, really.
A generation of sinners.
And when left to ourselves,
No generation has any hope.

Except. . . Jesus's final words today are some of the most comforting words in all of Scripture:

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

There is hope.

An invitation extended to us,

Beckoning us,

Calling us.

We haven't strayed too far.

We haven't been condemned.

We haven't lost our chance.

Such an invitation Jesus offers,

For he knows that we are exhausted and heavy-laden with burdens,

And he knows that we will never give ourselves true rest.

In the end,

Jesus is always offering us comfort and consolation.

Jesus is never leaving us to fend for ourselves.

In the waters of baptism,

All generations have been drowned and raised,

Yoked to Christ,

Called and claimed for eternity.

In these waters, all generations are made new,

All generations are re-generated.

In this bread and cup,

All generations have been fed and forgiven,

Yoked to Christ,

United in love and mercy.

In the gifts of this Table, all generations are made new,

All generations are re-generated.

And so whether we are the GI Generation,
The Silent Generation,
Baby Boomers,
Gen Xers,
Millennials,
Xenials,
Or Boomlets
We aren't stuck by the limitations,
or labels,
or patterns into which we were born
and raised.

We are, however, called out by Jesus this morning—
Called out of patterns and habits that trap us in sin—
That prevent us from seeing God,
That prevent us from trusting God.

But we are also called to Jesus—
As he takes our burdens,
As he yokes himself to us,
sharing with us,
carrying our life and all its heavy-ness with us,
walking alongside us—
from waking to sleeping,
from birth to death,
from generation to
generation.