The Baptism of the Lord

It may seem obvious that the theme for the Baptism of the Lord is “water,” but when one spends time with the readings today, one can see many different connotations for that water and its power. Isaiah calls the poor who are thirsty and tired to come to the water and take the spiritual food and drink that will be provided if we but seek the Lord. Here, God is both destination and consolation. The responsorial psalm follows suit with the image of drawing water from the springs of salvation. 1 John takes us to the reality of Christ as eucharist: not only Jesus’ birth and baptism, but his death, as we hear that Jesus came “by water and by blood.” The Gospel depicts John baptizing Jesus with water, and the Spirit baptizing Jesus. We experience both the humanity and the divinity of Christ. Indeed, water has much power to save us.

BEING THE MESSENGER

When we go to a pop music concert, there is often an opening act. Usually they are a young group on their way up, or older musicians who are past their prime and still hanging on in the business. This is indeed a hard job. In the comedy world it is the same thing. You have to warm up the crowd. You are not who they are coming to see, and audiences may be unresponsive, come in late, or not pay a lot of attention. Yet John had no problem being the opening act. Usually they are a young group on their way up, or older musicians who are past their prime and still hanging on in the business. This is indeed a hard job. In

BEING THE MESSAGE

As John humbly carried out his mission and Jesus accepted this simple baptism by John, the Holy Spirit indeed came down upon Jesus, and God proclaimed for the first time, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Thus Jesus began his formal ministry. There must have been much that he already knew, but also much that he uncovered each day in his encounters with the disciples and the crowds. As he responded “yes” to the Father over and over, his thirst was quenched and his spirit strengthened. How many times do we witness baptisms in the parish? The priest ministers with simple elements of water and oil, but the Spirit is called down each time. Every time we participate, we are experiencing the message, experiencing the call again. How many times have we blessed ourselves with holy water, or participated in a sprinkling rite? Yet in these days, when church fonts are empty due to safety precautions, we need to remember those other times, trust in God, and sing the prayer of Isaiah in our hearts about drawing the water joyfully. We must trust in the message. We must become the message of God’s saving action through our baptism and our lives.

Today’s Readings: Is 55:1–11; Is 12:2–3, 4bcd, 5–6; 1 Jn 5:1–9; Mk 1:7–11

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The Sign of the Cross

At the beginning of our prayer, we make the sign of the cross together. This sign, simple and powerful, operates on many levels. We trace the sign of the cross over our bodies, reminding ourselves that the cross of Christ has become our source of resurrection, life, and grace. With this sign, we also profess our faith in the Trinity: the presider does not say “in the names,” but “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”—three persons, one God. The sign of the cross is also a baptismal reminder, for every sign of the cross echoes the words spoken over us at our baptism, which marked our entry into the saving mystery of Christ. This many-layered sign is also our primary sign of blessing: the cross is traced over people, places, and things upon which we ask God to impart divine benediction. In blessing ourselves with the sign of the cross at the beginning of Mass, we acknowledge the mystery that has gathered us together: that Christ, the crucified and risen One, is living, and that we are members of his Body. Our response, our Amen, is our yes to all this, our first profession of faith.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.
Friends,

Sunday, the Lord's day, the first day of the week: The seven-day celebration of the Lord's day is the basic structure upon which the Church calendar is built. Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter's liturgical seasons are celebrations of particular aspects of one paschal mystery. These special seasons focus attention on critical dimensions of one mystery. Each Sunday, we celebrate the paschal mystery. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Today is the feast of the Lord's Baptism, which officially ends the Christmas season. After today the Church calendar turns to "Ordinary Time." In truth, there is nothing ordinary about this time. Each Sunday celebrates the paschal mystery, which is an identifying mark of our Christian community. We come together to praise the Lord of life, who was raised on the cross for our redemption.

In the Gospel this Sunday, Jesus is baptized in the Jordan by John, the Spirit appeared like a dove, and the Father made clear that Jesus was his Son with whom he was well pleased. What a scene this must have been! God was drawing our attention to baptism. "Everything that happened to Christ lets us know that, after the bath of water, the Holy Spirit swoops down from heaven and that, adopted by the Father's voice, we become sons of God."

As Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, and the Father spoke of his praises. The Trinity was present in three persons. "Just as our first creation was the work of the Trinity, so our second creation is the work of the Trinity." At every baptism, the person receiving the sacrament is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is also present, welcoming that soul into divine adoption.

We come together each Sunday to reflect on the Word of God. And at the Mass, in receiving the Eucharist, we receive Jesus himself, body, blood, soul, and divinity. Jesus Christ, who, by His sacrifice, opened up a way to eternal salvation. Let's continue to commit ourselves to the STEPS needed to move closer to our Father in Heaven, not just on Sundays, but every day.

Blessings,
Fr. Steve

A special THANK YOU to Hoffman Exterminating

who showed up with a full trailer of toys for the families who benefit from our Outreach ministry.

We are continually astounded by the generosity of the community around us. We are seeing Jesus in a new way this Christmas season—in all those who are giving and receiving.

Thank you!

These memories are more than one season of caring! You have been giving your constant support for the past 33 years.

Thank you for being this steadfast community who gives with so much heart!

In this most unusual year, you gave 753 gifts and 826 gift cards for a total of 1579 gifts of love.

May you know that it means so much to so many!
Here is your first featured FORMED video!

Let’s start off simple…. This video is less than 7 minutes

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The SNS 2020 Nativity video is now available to view on YouTube.
The 8th graders and the entire school worked extra hard to bring this beautiful Christmas story to you.

The filming and directing was done by 8th graders under the direction of Mrs. Mary Riisen. A big thanks to Mrs. Frack, Mr. D and all the faculty and staff for their help in doing the Nativity in a special way - even with live animals.

Visit You Tube to Click to see the video.
https://youtu.be/lgxlHEHdIa

We celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12

with a beautiful outdoor altar in her honor. The rosary was said and the community prayed together from their cars. Special thanks to all who made this possible.

Christmas Flower offering in honor of

*MARYANN H. WHALEN*  
REV. EDWARD SziPiecH  
LAMAR LAYFIELD  
ELIZABETH LAYFIELD  
LAMAR LAYFIELD JR.  
ROSE ROMANO  
JOSEPH ROMANO  
ANNA ROMANO  
ANTOINETTE ROMANO  
SALVATORE ROMANO  
JOSEPH & ANNA CECCO  
EDWIN & LORETTA WIDMANN  
CHARLES O’NEILL  
RICHARD J. PISANO  
MR. & MRS. GORDON COPELAND  
DANNY VOLPI  
BRENDA BELSITO  
SUSANNE B. DEMARCO  
PHILIP GIRVIN  
DOROTHY PALMER  
DR. CARLO & MARGORIE DEMARCO  
HARRY AND VERA RUDOLPH  
LOIS STARK  
MARGARET MARY GALLAGHER  
LAWRENCE PAUL GALLAGHER  
HELEN V. FALLON  
DIANA A. CHIACCHIERE  
CHIACCHIERE FAMILY  
ALOSI FAMILY  
DECEASED MEMBERS OF THE WALSH & SCANLAN FAMILIES  
JOHN SAVOY SR.  
PATTY GOODALL  
JOHN F. MULLER  
SUSIE MULLER  
BERNADETTE BROSKA  
NICK & LUCY DILISI  
RALPH & CONCETTA LUCITA  
JOSEPH & CONCETTA DILISI  
JOSEPH & CONCETTA DILISI  
ARCHANGELO & ANNA EROVINO  
SERGEANT LEA  
MARY JANE LEA  
JAY LEA  
CARMEN DIMARIO  
ROBERT DIMARIO  
CHRISTIAN CHARRON  
ROSEMARY & JOHN J. KELLY  
MARYBETH KELLY EVANS  
CATHERINE & GEORGE MULLER  
ANTONETTA & VINCENZO VOLPI  
ROSE & CHAP BELSITO  
CAMILLO & MARY VOLPI

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Pray for us!

Safe Environment Class
Monday, Jan. 25 @ 7pm
At St. Norbert’s

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PRACTICE
PRAYER & SACRAMENTS

Let’s talk Mass.

Not as in a quantity or an object’s measured resistance to force.

But The Mass, as in the central act of worship in our Catholic faith.

Many of us have been attending for a while, perhaps some of us are converts or took a little hiatus during college. Either way, this practice is something we’ve grown up with, scheduled our weekends to include or created family rituals around it. A practice that, surley, we have grown tired of once or twice. So why do we keep going?

We go because we know it’s not about us. Even though we receive the best gift ever given when we attend (Jesus) - the Mass is not about us. It is an act of worship that we offer to God. It’s about Him. And because He is good, we benefit from it. By going to and participating in Mass we are offered the chance to deepen our relationship with the Father, receive the mercy of the Son and be filled with the Spirit to share it all with others.

Even when we don’t feel like it, we continue the practice of attending Mass because it is the best place to seek Him and allow Him to find us.
A KNOCK SOUNDS
CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH
BLUMHARDT

For those who listen for Christ's coming, a knock sounds over and over again. The things that come forth are not necessarily highly spiritual. Sometimes they are very simple things. For instance, we may be told, "Don't neglect your bodies. Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor. 3:16) Why do you drink so much wine? Why do you eat so much food?" This seems contemptibly small...Yet for those who want to hear, there is a knock on the door for the coming future of Jesus Christ telling us to live for God in everything. It is not only your souls that matter, but your bodies too. Whoever is wise will open the door when God's messengers speak about this. Whoever is wise will go at it joyfully and confidently.

Source: Watch for the Light

READY, SET, GO?

One of the most difficult questions for me to answer during 2020 was "Should I go to Mass this week." And as I move into 2021, I'm finding it's easier to say no and use the pandemic as an excuse.

"The obligation's been lifted though." you might say. "You don't have to go."

Very true. I keep telling myself that. But there still something unsettled in my head and heart. Maybe it's my "catholic guilt". Maybe because I know it's what I should do. Or maybe it's my soul that has known what it's like to be close to its maker and is longing for that intimacy again.

I fear that when the covid is a thing of the past and I will have learned to live life without that intimacy, that this question will remain - but without the weight it carries now and accompanied by a shrug.

So, what do I do in the mean time to ensure that doesn't happen? Perhaps I could go to a weekday Mass with less people and less potential exposure. Or carve out intentional time on Sunday to worship and receive God's love. Whatever I do though, I know it will be worth it. And Jesus will be there waiting to bring me close to Him again.
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