

Christ Child Catholic Church
*Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the
Challenges of Loving Service*

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THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
January 10, 2021

After the LORD was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.
(Cf. Matthew 3:16-17)

First reading Isaiah 55: 1-11
An Invitation to Abundant Life

In this passage, the Lord contrasts His **thoughts** and **ways** with sinful Israel's. Human plans inevitably fail and falter, but the Lord's plans are different. When He promises forgiveness and restored blessing for His people. He will be true to His **word**. Just as the rain and snow fall to the ground and fulfill their God – given purpose unhindered, God's promises and purposes will be realized.

To **seek the Lord** means to approach Him through prayer and repentance. This carries with it the idea of discerning and emulating God's way of life and His character. The phrase **while He may be found** means that the opportunity for response is urgent. The language of these verses echoes other passages that look forward to a time when the Lord will restore His repentant people.

Second reading 1 John 5:1-9
Obedience by Faith

This verse couples two important tests that prove one is truly a child (**born**) of God: belief in Jesus as **Christ**, and love for God and for one another. If a person truly believes in the Person of Jesus

Christ, he or she will be characterized by love. This only happens by experiencing the spiritual birth that comes from God. A believer shows evidence of loving **the children of God** by keeping God's **commandments**. God's law is a product of His nature and expresses His will for His people. Defying His commands not only offends God but also corrupts the fabric of reality. Society, family, and friendships all pay a price when people sin. Unbelievers find God's commands **burdensome** because they lack what every believer has – the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, the believer finds obedience to be a source of peace. To **keep** involves watching over, carefully paying attention to, and never forgetting.

Those who know Christ have an overcoming spirit – and actual **victory** – despite the temptation and troubles of this world. The world can do nothing to reclaim believers; God has defeated the evil world system and taken loving ownership of His people.

John presents three infallible witnesses to prove that Jesus is God: **water** – Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, when the Father spoke from heaven; **the blood** – the historical death of Jesus on the cross for the sins of His people; and **the Spirit** – given to bear witness to Christ. Since the witness of humans is readily accepted, how much more valid should **the witness of God be?** People reject Jesus at their own peril.

The Gospel Mark 1: 7-11
John Baptizes Jesus

From the beginning, John the Baptist preached the superiority of Jesus Christ, viewing Jesus as both **mightier** than himself and infinitely more **worthy**. Although his contemporaries considered John a great man – and Jesus Himself said no one greater had ever lived – John saw himself as unfit even to attend to Jesus's feet, the dirtiest and least appealing part of a person's body according to that culture.

John the Baptist proclaimed Christ's superiority by distinguishing between his own baptism **with water** and the Messiah's baptism with **the Holy**

Spirit. Jesus' baptism supplies His followers with spiritual power. Mark starts not with Jesus's birth but His baptism, the start of His public ministry. Most commentators believe that Jesus began His public ministry when He was 30 years of age. Jesus came to John **from Nazareth** – a despised town whose region is nonetheless mentioned in a famous OT prophecy of blessing. Note that all three members of the Trinity were present at this scene. The **parting** of heaven prefigured Jesus' statement that the kingdom of heaven is near and the rending of the temple veil upon His death. The coming of Jesus ended the separation between God and humanity.

For Pregnancy Support
Birthright 241-8444 or 800-550-4900

MASS INTENTIONS January 9 – 15, 2021

Saturday 4:00 pm. + Susan Parker

Sunday 10:00 am. + Cecily Olsen

Tuesday 9:00 am. + Tim Kelly
Gertrude Seastron

Thursday 9:00 am. + Richard Leo Lyons

Friday 9:00 am. + Nickie Kovac

Stewardship of Treasure
January 2 & 3, 2021 Plate Collection \$ 1,699.00
Thank you and God bless your generosity!

Prayer requests, can be email to
christchildchurchprayerline@gmail.com

WOMEN'S CLUB/ PRAYER GROUP

We meet 4th Wednesday of each month,
January 27th 2021 from 1 to 2:30 pm.
Our focus is social and spiritual; at the same time.

The Open Path For Jesus
More than a few practicing Christians understand their faith as only an "obligation". There is a pattern of beliefs that one "ought" to accept; there's also a list of laws that one "ought" to observe, though some don't understand very well so many demands on the part of God; lastly there

are some religious practices that one "ought" to fulfill, albeit in a routine manner.

This way of understanding and living our faith generates a type of tiresome Christianity, without desire for God and without any creativity or passion to spread our faith. It's enough to "fulfill". This religion has nothing attractive at all; it becomes a heavy burden to endure, more than a few find them allergic to it. Simone Weil isn't on the wrong track when she writes that "Where the desire to encounter God is lacking, there won't be believers there, but only poor caricatures of people who are driven to God by fear or by interest".

In the early Christian communities they lived things differently. Christian faith wasn't understood as a "religious system". They called it "the way" and they put it forward as the most certain way to live with meaning and hope. It's said that it's a "new and living way" that "has been inaugurated by Jesus for us", a way that we run "with our eyes fixed on Jesus" (Hebrews 10:20; 12:2).

It's very important to be aware that faith is a journey and not a religious system. And in a journey there's a bit of everything: joyful march and moments of searching, testing that must be overcome and fallback, unavoidable decisions, doubts and questions. It's all part of the path: even the doubts that can be more stimulating that quite a few certainties and securities that are held routinely and simplistically.

Each one must make their own journey. Each one is responsible for the "adventure" of one's life. Each one has their own rhythm. No one needs to force anything. In the Christian path there are steps: people can live through different moments and situations. What's important is "to walk", not get stuck; listen to the call that makes us all live with more dignity and happiness.

José Antonio Pagola
Translator: Fr. Jay Vonhandorf