

A MESSAGE FROM DEACON ED

January 10, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have begun a New Year, and for many of us, we are glad to see 2020 end. It is a milestone in our lives that many are glad to leave behind.

Such is our tendency to look at the events in our lives in a linear fashion. We go through life from point A to point B to point C, mere waypoints on the trail of our life. Some events are celebrated at the time with cards, gifts, and parties. When the party is over, we move on.

This is part of our progression through some of the most important journeys of our lives. We go to school and celebrate when we graduate. We get a job and party when we retire. Even our birthdays are counted with milestones (13, 16, 50?) that are celebrated, passed, and checked off. Not so with celebrations in our Church.

Through the Church's liturgical calendar, we are called to remember the milestones of Jesus' life, not as waypoints in His life, but as everyday examples for our lives. One of the most influential ways we are drawn closer to Christ's life is through the Sacraments.

The celebration of the Baptism of the Lord occurs every year in our Church calendar. We are told of extraordinary events brought about by the Father's pronouncement that Jesus was, in fact, His "beloved Son". For the Jewish people at the time, these words would have been received as a proclamation of the Messiah, as foretold in Isaiah. From that point on He was no longer a private individual, his ministry had begun.

Catechism tells us that sacraments are "efficacious signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us." Accordingly, we are meant to be transformed by our Baptisms. Whether we are baptized as infants or later in life, we all are charged with becoming like Christ through the acceptance of the grace of the Lord and by acting according to His will. That, in linear thinking, sure sounds like a waypoint.

For all too many, Baptism is treated like a type of Catholic "checkmark" which is merely a step along life. We have a party, get some gifts, receive some cards. Once done, we move on with life, never really considering the affect on our lives, or the lives of the child we promise to guide. However, if we escape a linear mindset, we are suddenly faced with a more robust affect on ourselves.

If we embrace the Sacrament of Baptism as a grace of God, we must look for the effect of that grace on our lives. We can look to the promises made at Baptism as the way to interact with God, his Church and each other. Our profession of Faith combined with the renunciation of sin are not meant to be one-time proclamations, but the core values by which we conduct our lives. While we may not know the date of our Baptism, we can celebrate the event in our own lives not just once a year, but daily.

Deacon Ed