

Feast of the Baptism of our Lord
January 10th, 2021
Cycle B

1st Reading: Isaiah 55:1 – 11.

God is our provider at no financial cost and invites us to come.

Psalm Response: Psalm 29:1 – 2,3 – 4, 3, 9 – 10.

God will bless God's people with peace.

2nd Reading: 1 John 5:1 – 9.

God is the subject of our faith through Spirit, water, and blood.

Gospel: Mark 1:7 – 11.

God calls us God's beloved.

God is good, **all the time**, All the Time, **God is good**

I don't know about you, but my mind has been overwhelmed this week by the violent demonstration on the national capital building which has left 6 people dead. It's just one of those days that go down in infamy, like the assassinations of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Senseless acts of violence just hold me hostage and this latest one in a time when we hope for the "peace" that the Christ has promised. We as Christians have much to do, remembering it begins with us and hoping this is sort of a purifying baptism by fire, allowing our nation to begin anew.

Liturgically this is still Christmas! However, the Baptism of Jesus does culminate the Christmas season, Monday we enter the 1st week of Ordinary or Ordinal Time. We've had the birth of our Lord, the visit of the Magi, and now today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. In between all those celebrations we celebrated the Feast of the Holy Family as a human model for family life. These celebrations are all manifestations, epiphanies or events that reveal to us (open the curtain) just who Jesus the Christ is.

This is big for us and the body of Christ, the Church. Memory is so important to our faith. The current pandemic has Interfered with my memory by removing our font, which I used every time I entered or left this space with the sign that was branded on my forehead at my Baptism. It is with you my friends, and because of you, that I am able to claim the name "Christian" which matches the brand on me. Powerful stuff! This is not only the Christ's baptism but our baptism and the day on which God's voice came down and exclaimed over each of us as God's "Beloved!" You joe add names.... Are my "beloved!!"

Speaking of memories, that is why I chose the optional readings for today, not that there was anything I wanted to avoid in the 1st of the "Suffering servant" passages in *Isaiah*; Peter's declaration of what he witnessed in the *Acts of the Apostles*. This reading from *Isaiah 55* we heard proclaimed today was always a reading at the Easter Vigil and if any of you ever attended, you, like me, would remember Tony Nelson proclaiming this by our font inviting us to "Come, receive, eat, and drink." For no cost this is God's invitation; and ALL are invited to come to our Lord and be refreshed and nourished.

Then the reading from *John 1* points out the trinitarian elements of our God and our faith and our baptisms. The Spirit, the water, and the blood (and I would add fire) are in one accord and return us to our original state, something lost by our ancestors that is why remembering is so important! It allows us to avoid repeating mistakes of the past. "You are my beloved."

Then the Gospel, which because it is year B is from *Mark*. The beginning of *Mark* is the appearance of the best second-fiddle man in history, John the Baptist. Jesus is coming down from Galilee to be baptized in the Jordan by John. Did he need it? Of course not, and John recognized that, but Jesus wanted it, so he went down into the dirty, muddy Jordan, a river of new life to the Jewish people. And what happens? The sky is ripped open, torn open, and a dove appears and a voice which says, "YOU are my beloved." Much more personal and intimate than Matthew's or

Luke's account where the voice declares "this is my beloved Son." This intimacy is offered to us: "YOU are my beloved!"

One more reflection, I promise, the word used to describe this tear, this hole, in the sky is not a temporary rip which will close up. It is a tear that has now brought heaven down to touch the earth: heaven and earth are now one because Jesus entered the Jordan. We now have access to the promised land if we keep faith and live out our baptismal promises. Remember YOU ARE MY BELOVED!

Remembering is important! That is why Fr. Paul and I put our heads together, a dangerous thing to be sure, and decided to bless some water in small bottles so you can take them home with you, to the domestic church; and hopefully give it a place of prominence, maybe on one of your altars, i.e. dinner table, to help you always remember the day you put on the Christ. You are my beloved!

LET US CONTINUE OUR REMEMBERING AT THIS ALTAR

God is Good, **all the time.** All the time, **God is good.**