



Thoughts on the Journey

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Christmas at Church of the Resurrection is quite a celebration. Months of planning are invested in making the liturgies a rich communal experience marking the Birth and Incarnation of our Lord Jesus. The Liturgy Committee met a number of times to plan the feast; Fr. Denis and Deacon Kevin prepared and delivered relevant homilies; the music ministry has spent countless hours planning and rehearsing the music; the Art & Environment Ministry invested their time and creative imagination donning the church environment to reflect the joy of the season; the maintenance team worked to make the church a pristine worship space, cleaning and sanitizing before and after Masses; lectors, altar servers, sacristans, Eucharistic Ministers, greeters, sound board techs, all committed to serving at the season's liturgies. In addition, because of the Covid restrictions, the office staff worked tirelessly arranging Mass reservations and provided assigned seating so that all would be safely distanced. All of these people concentrated on their individual contributions to piece together a magnificent season.

This harmony of effort is a beautiful illustration of what happens when people concentrate on their service to the community and the influence it has on those who experience the fruits of their efforts. Each person showing up to do their part in order to create an impact for the whole. So often when we are gazing at the wonder of the big picture, we overlook the big influence of all the smaller endeavors that created the experience. No one really has to show up or participate in doing their part, but they do because it enriches the community and gives praise to God.

Today is the last day of the Christmas Season when we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. Following the line of thinking that small things have a big influence on the collective whole, we look at Jesus' willingness to humble himself to become man. At the time, his cousin John was calling for the people of Israel to

repent and to be washed in the waters of baptism. Jesus was free of sin and there was no reason for him to repent or to be baptized. But, Jesus further humbled himself by being baptized by his cousin. It was a small thing that Jesus did that had a huge impact on the bigger picture of salvation for all of history. To further enhance God's relationship with his people, Jesus outwardly identifies with our sinfulness and sets the example for us all. He cooperated with the will of his Father and was washed in the river.

On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

It was a small thing that Jesus did to demonstrate his obedience and to publicly declare his dependence on God's grace: a small part of the many gestures, actions, and examples that Jesus gave us that make up the magnificent story of our salvation.

As this joyful season comes to a close, our relationship with a loving God continues. It's a good time to reflect on the big influence of small things, whether it's Jesus' willingness to be baptized whether he needed to or not, or the countless number of people who committed to serve a community of believers by preparing for Christmas whether they had to or not, or the kindness we extend to strangers on the street, or forgiveness of injustices done to us, or small gestures of solidarity we extend to the oppressed, or Christian charity that we extend in thought, word, and action - whether we have to or not.

Like Jesus, let us cooperate with the grace of our baptism and commit to the small things that contribute to our personal relationship with God and our responsibility to help build the Body of Christ throughout the world so that one day we can hear the voice of the Father say to us, "You are my beloved child; with you I am well pleased."