

Baptism of the Lord 2021

Isaiah 55: 1-11; PSALM Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6, 1 Jn 5:1-9; Mk 1:7-11

It is said that there are great days in a person's life – “the day we are born and the day we discover why.” (Mark Twain)

The day that we were born is certainly an important day in our life. Who can ever forget his or her birthday?

Besides our birthday, there is a wedding day for those married among us.

Sometimes ago, a wife complained, saying, “My husband remembered our wedding anniversary only for a first few years. He has forgotten all the following years. Obviously, my feelings are hurt and he apologized, but I still feel weird about it, like our marriage is not important.”

So, husbands, if you want peace and fulfillment in life, remember your wedding anniversary and love your wife.

Is there any other day that we shouldn't forget? How many of us remember the day when we were baptized?

I guess not. Frankly, I don't remember either. But rest assured, that God would never reject us for that.

In a sense, today's celebration -- the Baptism of the Lord -- is about that very thing. This was the moment when the world began to recognize Jesus as “**The One**”, in the words of St. John Baptist, “**Mightier than I.**”

He was now and forevermore to be seen as God's Chosen One, the Anointed, the Messiah, the Beloved, God's own Son. And from that moment on, everything would be different -- Jesus' life, the lives of his family and friends, his relationship to the Jewish and Roman authorities, and his place in human history. Once Jesus was acknowledged as “**The One**”, there was no going back.

We all need that special someone, whether it's a spouse, a best friend, a confidant, or someone we can always count on. Life is tough enough without trying to manage it alone.

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A person who is willing to accompany us on our journey is invaluable. And when we find those kinds of people, we tend to not let them go very easily. To do so would be foolish. And so we cling to them with all our strength.

And yet it doesn't always work out that way. We know that the best of relationships sometimes come to an end due hardship and misunderstanding or whatever the circumstances. Some couples who start out truly believing that the other person is "**The One**" can't sustain those feelings forever.

But some can. Whether it's hard work, or flexibility, or a forgiving heart, or God's grace, or all of the above. Some people are able to weather the storms of life, if you will, through difficulty after difficulty, challenge after challenge. Others find a way to keep affirming their partner as still being "**The One**".

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

Even though our faith begins as a pure gift from a loving God, its blossoming and development is often directly related to the degree to which we are able to affirm Jesus as "**The One**", as the person who matters the most.

Is he still "**The One**" for each of us? Is he the person in whom we place all our hope and trust and confidence? Is he the one with whom we want to spend the rest of our lives?

The thirst to find that one special person is in all of us. And it is a powerful desire. Naturally, many of us have trouble figuring out just how to satisfy that thirst.

And so many of us turn to all sorts of things in search of "the ONE" -- astrology, numerology, palm readings, tarot, ouija board, you name it. And it's all with the hopes of entering into the mystery of finding that ONE.

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Well, we need not look any further, for we have already found him -- or rather he found us.

And because of our baptism we have the capacity to enter into the most meaningful relationship with God -- a relationship based on true love, compassion, and fidelity. We don't have to wonder if it will last, or if God will be faithful, or whether we will drift apart.

No harm can come to this relationship unless we allow it to, unless we grow bored, thoughtless and indifferent. But if we don't, the sky's the limit and the relationship with Jesus can become eternal. It will always be there. What we make of it is largely up to us.

It was just two weeks ago that we celebrated Christmas with such joy and hope, completely caught up in the baby in manger who truly was "The One", what he meant and means to the world.

Well, today, we end the Christmas season. And the question we need to contemplate this day is whether or not the adult Jesus will continue to be that special person in our lives. That is challenge.

Like a marriage union, baptism unites us to Jesus and one another in a very particular way and forever; it affirms each of us as special to God.

As St. John tells us in the Second Reading, **"Beloved: Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten by God, and everyone who loves the Father loves also the one begotten by him."**

Jesus and us. Begotten and beloved forever. Amen.