
BAPTISM OF THE LORD

JANUARY 10, 2021



THIS WEEK'S MASS INTENTIONS

- 5 p.m.: Kevin Brown, Phil SanFilippo, Clare Costello and Chuck Velzay
- 10 a.m.: Carol Nardo, Jon Van Tassel, Eileen Carson and Laurence O'Brien

LAST WEEK'S MASS ATTENDANCE

- 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31: **30**
8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 1: **22**
5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2: **44**
10 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 27: **52** in the church;
15 in the hall

CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathies to Nick Pierce, upon the death New Year's Day of Christine "Chris" Pierce, his wife, and to the family of Sophie Sandor, who died last Saturday and was predeceased by her husband, Paul, in October. Please keep them in your prayers.

"So, then, let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another."

- St. Paul

TREASURER'S REPORT

Dec. 27-Jan. 3: Totaled \$ 6,883.12

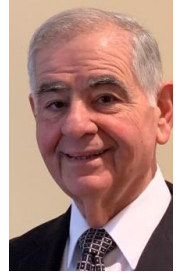
Envelopes: \$ 5,732.00 – Online: \$ 1,151.12

Additional Christmas donations: \$1,030.00

THANK YOU!

LEARN THE RULES FIRST

On several occasions during my years teaching high school English, I was approached by students who would complain that I had mercilessly red-marked fragmented or run-on sentences. They would point out that in the literature we were studying, the authors used an abundance of sentence fragments and even run-ons. So why couldn't they, "my budding young Hemingways," do the same?



I guess the enthusiasm and impetuosity of the youthful amateur has caused many of us as well to want to forego learning the basic rules of life and skip ahead to our own mastery of living. And that brings me to today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

In his book "The Wisdom Pattern," Richard Rohr explains that we need to understand why Jesus' religion normally has to be preceded by John the Baptist's religion. John is the precursor of Jesus, and his Baptism is only a preparation for Jesus' Baptism. John's is a Baptism of repentance, a realization of what we are doing wrong with a clear resolution to correct our bad behavior.

Growing up, we need to begin with structure, order, security and absolutes, but eventually those fail us. Then we need to move toward more tolerant, risk-taking, exception-making behavior. Again, like those high school students, we must first practice the rules before we can break the rules or know what the rules really mean.

Sadly, many of us, who are solid believers, are still trying to live out our lives by John's Baptism alone; that is, by our willpower to adhere to those Ten Commandments we learned as children. It is great to start with John the Baptist, but we need to end with Jesus, with a deeper immersion into the Baptism of Jesus; that is, an entry into community and grace, an entry that empowers us internally to do what is impossible for us to do by our willpower alone.

St. Paul tells us that obedience to norms is not the same as the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5). Loyalty to norms prefers order; however, faith operates in chaos. We need both, but the second is more necessary for any creative or new future - and that seems to be where our baptismal call is always trying to lead us. St. Teresa of Avila tells us in her book, "The Interior Castle," that we need to work through the early stages of our beliefs and convictions and leave them behind in the first room of our interior castle; otherwise, we are not able to move forward to other rooms.

Until we allow the Gospel to move us into the deepest levels of commitment and touch our worldviews, nothing substantial is going to change. It will only be rearranging the furniture, not constructing a new room. Jesus' Baptism reminds us that our own (Continued on the next page)

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Baptism is a call to conversion: It is about constructing a new room or maybe even a whole new house.

Today's feast brings the Christmas season to an end. To recall the promises of our Baptism, I would like to end with a poem composed by Howard Thurman, a theologian, educator and civil rights leader:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.*

PRAYER FOR DONNING A FACE MASK

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of wearing this mask. Let it be a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbors, as I love myself.



Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be

muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath it holds be filled with your love. In your name and in that love, I pray. Amen.

BOTH MASSES NOW LIVE-STREAMED

Given the success of the live-streaming of the Christmas Masses, which had hundreds of viewers, Fr. Sean and the Parish Council have decided that the 10 a.m. Mass every Sunday will be live-streamed into the safety of your home via the following link, which can be copied into your browser:

<https://www.twitch.tv/10915spmb>

Additionally, we've begun to stream the 5 p.m. Saturday Mass as well. However, we still need to train a few more volunteers. The more people to rotate into a schedule, the easier it will be to ensure its continuation without over-burdening one or two people.

The streaming setup is simple and does not require more than a few minutes of training – and no professional background is necessary!

Interested? Let Deb in the office know at 361-3107.

THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE ...

- Who could have anticipated this holiday stall in some of the sorting offices of the U.S. Postal Service? We've learned that some of you still have not received your box of envelopes, which were mailed December 13 and 14. They should get to you eventually. In the meantime, a plain envelope will do. Note your envelope number, if you know it. If not, we'll make sure you get proper credit using your last name.
- Speaking of envelopes, there are large white envelopes in the church vestibules as well as in Deacon John Hall. Inside are the **2021 Catholic Calendars**, donated by Rich Lalli of Gagan Funeral Home.



YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE

Christmastime is a time of joy, and this is reflected in our Youth Ministry, too.

Chris Worthington, youth minister, and Deb, his wife, orchestrated "fun" meetings before Christmas Eve and again before the start of the New Year.

Rather than a theme and quest for meaningful Scripture passages, the evenings were filled with discussions about favorite holiday movies, songs and plans.

"Just about everyone was in the spirit with Christmas hats, and we had a lot of laughter," says Chris.

The following week, conversation ran the gamut from Christmas highlights to New Year's plans and LEGOs to "Star Wars" – and more.

"Our main goal was to keep the kids engaged and attending during the break," says Chris. And they did.

SPONSOR OF THE WEEK

