

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2016

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Get into the spirit of your Baptism

The Rite of Baptism is our initiation into the Christian community of the church. As baptized persons, we are part of the “one spirit” that makes us members of the Body of Christ and each other. And with this gift of Baptism we have a responsibility to carry out the light and love of Christ to the world. What does that look like? A welcome to the stranger; an embrace of an enemy; a sacrifice for the sake of another. Let the spirit of your Baptism light a fire of love under you!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 or 40:1-5, 9-11; Acts 10:34-38 or Titus 2:11-14; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22 (21).* “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

MONDAY, JANUARY 11

The Door of Mercy is open to you

About a month ago, the Holy Father unsealed the Door of Mercy at St. Peter's Basilica and has urged that such doors be available in dioceses around the world. There's something powerful about a door. Ever gone into a room in your home and ask yourself: “Why did I come in here?” Scientists say it happens because going through a doorway creates a different context, which distracts you and you say “Why am I here?” But when you pass through a Door of Mercy, you'll know very well why you're there: to experience the mercy of God. And when you leave, it is to carry compassion to others. So find out where a Door of Mercy may be in your area.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:1-8; Mark 1:14-20 (305).* “The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

Good for what ails you

We don't talk of “evil spirits” so much anymore, except perhaps in horror movies. Our secular age tends to seek medical and psychological explanations—and the corresponding medicines—for whatever ails us. Whether you choose to look at your habits, afflictions, and addictions in medical or spiritual terms—or perhaps a bit of both—one thing is certain: Jesus came to heal. We're not talking miracle cures here, though that may happen: just good, old-fashioned strength and wisdom healing, as found in the Serenity Prayer used by many addiction recovery programs. It's easy to find online: good medicine for maladies of all sizes, shapes, and names.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 1:9-20; Mark 1:21-28 (306).* “He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.”

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

Hearing voices

At the root of every vocation is a call; the word itself means “to call.” And what kind of call? The call to listen well. This call is lived out in prayer, reflection, and relationship with others. Sometimes a call is heard in the silence of your heart and other times it



is the encouragement of another that can point to the deeper calling of your life. Whatever form in which the call comes, you need to be able to listen to what God might be asking of you. Trust that God is speaking, be brave enough to answer, and when you do, be sure to listen to all God has to say in response!

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20; Mark 1:29-39 (307).* “If you are called, reply, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

Act in good faith

“In Sacred Scripture, mercy is a key word that indicates God's action toward us. He does not limit himself merely to affirming his love, but makes it visible and tangible.” Pope Francis reminds us that faith has a claim on action. As Christians, we not only testify in words that we love others as God loves us. We also testify in actions—praying for people who suffer injustice, helping people in need, caring for families and friends. Throughout this Year of Mercy, may we further be a light of Christ in the world, expressing our faith in action to others.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 4:1-11; Mark 1:40-45 (308).* “Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched the leper, and said to him, ‘I do will it. Be made clean.’”

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

Healing is more than skin deep

Many believing, faithful people who are ill feel they are being punished by God: “What did I do to deserve this?” In Jesus' day the Pharisees were like that, assuming God found the sick unclean. But Jesus welcomed them, saw their faith and human dignity. While the sacrament of the Anointing is the presence of Christ to heal, some people wonder why—when a loved one is anointed—he or she does not jump up healed. That is likely what we wish, but it is in God's hands. But sacramental anointing does much to heal the soul, to bring peace, and remind the sick person that he or she is not “unclean” or forgotten, but beloved of God. A visit or phone call from you today may also have strong healing power.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 8:4-7; Mark 2:1-12 (309).* “I say to you, rise, pick up your mat, and go home.”

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16

Living your yes

Jesus says to each of us: “Follow me.” That call is an invitation. You must choose to respond, not just in word or deed but with your life. No matter your vocation—whether single life, vowed religious life, or the priesthood—the way you live is what ultimately bears witness to what you believe. Thus your life becomes both a call and a response—by answering yes to Jesus and, in the process, inviting everyone you encounter to a life of faith lived out.

TODAY'S READINGS: *1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a; Mark 2:13-17 (310).* “I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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