

## Sunday, Jan 13, 2019

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

### Stories that could be true

Our place in the cosmic scheme of things is always a large question mark at the back of our minds. As poet William Stafford suggests in “A Story That Could Be True,” we journey through the world like homeless souls, wondering if maybe there’s a greater home where we might truly belong and be at peace. “Who are you really, wanderer?” Stafford asks. This question has many answers. John the Baptist accepts that he’s not the Christ; he’s just the messenger. Jesus embraces his identity as the beloved Son. Consider what could be true—of you.

TODAY’S READINGS: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22 (21). *“All were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ.”*

## Monday, Jan 14, 2019

### An unsigned letter from an inspired author

This month the liturgy uses extensively the Letter to the Hebrews, which has been called the “most elegant and sophisticated, and perhaps the most enigmatic, text of first-century Christianity.” In early centuries it was usually attributed to Saint Paul, but the language and theology are very unlike Paul’s letters. The truth is, no one knows for certain who authored it. After discussing the possibilities, Origen (185-254), the first great biblical scholar, remarked: “But who wrote the epistle, in truth, God knows.” Regardless of authorship, Hebrews is famous for its image of the “high priesthood” of Christ. That “priesthood of all believers” belongs to all of us as followers of Christ—are you in for the journey?

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 1:1-6; Mark 1:14-20 (305). *“Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me and I will make you fish for people.’”*

## Tuesday, Jan 15, 2019

### Ask an authority on the subject

Jesus astounded the people who met him along the way not only by the great deeds and signs that he performed and by what he taught—to love one’s enemies or forgive countless times. The amazement of the crowds was also due to the authority with which he spoke, not citing other rabbis or scholars but teaching from his own soul. In the church we often identify “authority” only with the teaching office, the Catechism, the decrees of popes, or the sense of the faithful. But the authority with which each baptized person testifies to Christ is also the authority, the authenticity, of his or her own life of faith, justice, and mercy.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 2:5-12; Mark 1:21-28 (306). *“The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.”*

## Wednesday, Jan 16, 2019

### Just showing up is not enough

Woody Allen is quoted as saying, “90 percent of life is showing up.” What, though, do we do with the other 10 percent? The story of God calling the prophet Samuel attests that just showing up won’t take you the whole way. The first two times Samuel heard a voice calling him in the night, he responded only, “Here I am!” The priest Eli, knowing something of God’s ways, informs the young man that merely presenting himself in the holy place is insufficient. Samuel must also declare himself the servant of the

Lord. Likewise, we should not rely on just showing up for the Lord. The final 10 percent is the part that makes the difference.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 2:14-18; Mark 1:29-39 (307). *“As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.”*

## Thursday, Jan 17, 2019

MEMORIAL OF ANTHONY, ABBOT

### The hermit next door

When people think of a hermit, someone like Saint Anthony the Great usually comes to mind. He was one of the first in the Christian tradition to give away his worldly wealth and go off to live alone in the desert. But consider this: There might be Catholic hermits in your very neighborhood! It’s not common, but this vocation involves living a life of prayer and contemplation in solitude—in any diocese where a person might be, with the acceptance and under the direction of their bishop. Pray for those holy hermits who could be in your midst.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 3:7-14; Mark 1:40-45 (308). *“He remained outside in deserted places.”*

## Friday, Jan 18, 2019

### One in Jesus

Today begins the Octave (“eight days”) of Prayer for Christian Unity, a week of special prayer for the unity of all Christians with Jesus the Lord—who prayed at the Last Supper for his followers “that they all may be one.” Many things keep Christians in their separate churches and communities. But in the end they share a common faith in Jesus who shows us who God is and calls us to love one another as God loves us. Pray today—and this week, and beyond this week—that Christians will find more to unite them than divide them.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 4:1-5, 11; Mark 2:1-12 (309). *“So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them . . . and Jesus was speaking the word to them.”*

## Saturday, Jan 19, 2019

### Get into the ecumenical spirit

Not sure what you can do to promote Christian unity besides avoiding calling other Christians non-Catholics? Here is some simple advice found in Vatican II’s *Decree on Ecumenism*: “All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name ‘spiritual ecumenism.’”

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 2:13-17 (310). *“Many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus—for there were many who followed him.”*

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



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