Encountering the Heart of Christ in the Heart of Boston

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
January 12, 2020
The Epiphany Sunday of the Magi is always followed by the Baptism of the Lord Sunday because this mystery is part of the Epiphany. Remember that Epiphany means manifestation of God. The Holy Trinity is manifested like never before. God the Father’s voice was heard from Heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." God the Son appeared in human form and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. (Luke 3:22)

John was very popular, yet he was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness at the River Jordan instead of downtown Jerusalem. Why? The River Jordan was the place where the Exodus from Egypt ended. It is the place where the Israelites entered the Promised Land. After all those centuries, the Twelve Tribes of Israel were reduced to one or two Tribes that were now governed and oppressed by the Roman Emperor and a puppet king, Herod, who had no right to rule over Israel since he was not of the family line of King David. The people knew that the time had arrived for a new Exodus, a new Moses, an anointed one to liberate them from the Romans and their own sin.

They thought John might be that anointed one. The word Christ means anointed one. Remember, David was anointed with oil by Samuel. Anointing meant that one was chosen by God to lead. The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John knew what they were thinking so he sets them straight. "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals." (Luke 3:16)

It was a slave’s job to remove somebody’s sandals. John tells the people that there is an infinite difference between his baptism with plain water and Christ’s, which would be a baptism with Holy Spirit and Fire. Saint Luke, in Acts, describes the coming of the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire. John’s baptism was important to get people prepared; he got them to repent. His baptism was a sign that people wanted to have their sins washed away. But it was not a sacrament. A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give Grace. Supernatural Grace is the Life of God in us. It is like transfusion of God’s life into us. That is why parents should not delay baptizing their children.

Canon 867 §1. Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it.
Feast Day: January 15
Patron of: The nation of Georgia

Nina was born in the region of Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey) in the year 300. She was probably a slave who was brought to Georgia. There she lived a very quiet and pious life and her zeal for the Lord was shared with others. Nina was unafraid to speak of Christ and of finding real freedom with him. Through her example and bold proclamation many became converted to the faith. She is said to have even converted the queen of Georgia. She is an example of a true lay apostle.

Mass Intentions This Week

Sunday, January 12 — Baptism of the Lord
8:00 AM Maximilian Guilbert — birthday
9:15 AM + Marion Snee
10:30 AM + Mary Costello
11:45 AM Clarita Pinto
1:15 PM (esp.) + Ana Vasquez
4:00 PM John Valleli — health
5:30 PM + Edgar Castillo

Monday, January 13 — St. Hilary
8:00 AM Marianne Broderick — health
12:05 PM + Sandra McKessey
4:45 PM + Antonio Carnevale

Tuesday, January 14
8:00 AM Marylou Bozza
12:05 PM + Sandra McKessey
4:45 PM + Eleanor Pieri

Wednesday, January 15
8:00 AM + James Buonopane
12:05 PM + Micheál O’Briain
4:45 PM Mr. & Mrs. Luciano Sforza — health

Thursday, January 16
8:00 AM + Fr. Bernard Campbell, OFM, Cap
12:05 PM + Francisa Maldonado
4:45 PM + Francisa Maldonado

Friday, January 17 — St. Anthony, Abbot
8:00 AM + Francisa Maldonado
12:05 PM + Marion McGrath
4:45 PM Anthony Spagnulo — health

Saturday, January 18
9:00 AM + Renee Barton
12:00 PM + Kathleen Corcoran
4:00 PM + Daniel F. Carr & + Daniel F. Donahue
5:30 PM Sgt. David Rodriguez & U.S. Soldiers in the Middle East
7:00 PM (esp.) + Anna Bertha

My God, I offer you this holy sacrifice to recognize, honor and glorify your infinite greatness and the supreme dominion which, as the first principle and last end, you have above all created things. I give you this homage for all those who still do not know you or do not want to recognize you.

I offer this too in thanksgiving for the benefits that I and all the world have received and will receive from your infinite goodness; in satisfaction for my sins and those of the whole world; to implore the graces that are necessary for my eternal salvation and for all mankind. Oh, my God, I offer to you the merits of Jesus Christ; grant me at this Holy Mass a profound adoration.

My God, my Creator, I implore you to grant me the grace of final perseverance, I know by faith that I do not deserve it, nor can I deserve it, but your Divine Son deserves it for me with so many praises, with so many wounds he shows you in his Most Holy Body, on behalf of my wounded love. Amen.
The first sacrament is of course baptism. Without it no other sacrament may be received. In baptism we are marked by God’s hand as his child, freed from original sin and given the ability to worship him and walk in his ways. We must be marked by God in order to live in his kingdom and receive the gifts of that kingdom, namely, the other sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

In normal circumstances a baptism must be celebrated in a parish church by either a bishop, priest or deacon. That parish will forever be the place of record for the person baptized. In the future when a baptismal certificate is needed the person must ask the parish where he or she was baptized for the certificate. If the parish has been closed for some reason, then you must call the archives of the diocese where that parish used to be.

Sometimes, unfortunately, there are emergency situations where someone is in serious danger of death. Only in those circumstances is it legitimate for any person to administer baptism. If you ever find yourself in that terrible circumstance you legitimately baptize someone if you pour water over the head three times and say, "(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Baptism and Prayer
By Ven. Bruno Lanteri, Founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

In the order of divine providence, the more necessary the means to salvation, the more God renders it easy to practice. Thus among the sacraments, there is nothing easier than Baptism; the matter is simply water, the minister any person, and it can be administered at any place, time, or age. So too one can pray in any place, at home, while traveling, in bed, at any time during the day or night, without sublimity of thought or elegance of style. Rather "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition" (Ps 101:18).

It is not necessary to wait for an audience, to seek out mediators, to study expressions. We ourselves are the temple of God. The heart is the altar where prayers reside and are welcome, without this welcoming other influences disturb us and close us off to the Word of God.

The Catholic Way: Baptism Day

Do you know the date of your baptism? It is a very pious tradition to celebrate the anniversary. The new life of Christ, the seed of eternal life is given to us at baptism, and it should be celebrated as every bit as important as our birthdays. The Church even offers a plenary indulgence to anyone who renews their baptismal promises on the anniversary of the day.

It would be good to ensure that we retain the sacramentals of our baptism: the candle and the white garment. Even if these items are lost we can celebrate the baptism anniversaries with a new candle. These anniversaries are something that should certainly be taught to children and become a family tradition.

Baptismal Anniversary Prayer (Adapt the words to your circumstances)

Remember this, Name.
You have been washed in the saving waters of baptism and anointed with holy oil.
Place on your head and in your heart the sign of the cross of salvation.
Trace the sign of the cross on the head and heart.

Lectio Divina

“I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice…” — Isaiah 42

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to receive the word of God with reverence and joy.

Notice the thoughts and emotions within you. As you prayerfully consider this passage, are you able to identify what thoughts and feelings are generated?

This is the word of God. Take time to consider it carefully. Clear from your mind all distractions. Does it bring you hope or frustration? What is the victory of justice? Do you know what justice means in the mind of God? What would the victory of justice look like? What does it mean that you are called to this victory? Take time right now to let these words touch your heart. Might you ask Mary to help you listen with confidence to the Lord?

Ask the Holy Spirit, in your heart, to help you to apply this to your life.