

St. John of the Cross Catholic Cluster

NOTRE DAME du MONT CARMEL

St. David
St. Gerard-Mt. Carmel
St. Thomas Aquinas

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY

St. Agatha
St. Luce
St. Joseph (Sinclair)
St. Michael (Summer Months)

ST. PETER CHANEL

St. Bruno - St. Remi
St. Joseph (Hamlin)



THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. - Lk 3:21-22a

Excerpt from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCC

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SACRAMENTAL & PASTORAL CARE

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please call your parish office for appointment.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday before 4pm Mass or by appointment.

SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Please call your parish office at least 6 months prior to date.

SACRAMENT OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call your parish office.

FUNERALS

Please contact the Cluster 2 business office.

NEW PARISHIONERS

If you are new to the parish or have an address or phone number change, please contact your parish office.

JANUARY 9, 2022

PASTOR

Fr. Kent Ouellette

DEACONS

Rev. Mr. Donald R. Clavette

Rev. Mr. Rodney Deschaine

CLUSTER 2 BUSINESS COORDINATOR

Greg Cyr

Cluster 2 Website

www.sjvcatholics.org

Cluster 2 Facebook Site

St John Valley Catholics

NOTRE DAME DU MONT CARMEL

309 St. Thomas Street, Suite 103

Madawaska, ME 04756

Parish Office / Cluster 2 Business Office - 728-7531

notredamedumontcarmel@portlanddiocese.org

Faith Formation Office - 728-7135

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY

379 Main St./PO Box 10, St. Agatha, ME 04772

Parish Office - 543-7447

ourladyofthevalley@portlanddiocese.org

Faith Formation Office - 543-6119

ST. PETER CHANEL

174 Main St., Van Buren, ME 04785

Parish Office - 868-2718

StPeterChanelParish@portlanddiocese.org

Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Mass Schedule

Saturday, January 8

4:00pm ST: **(LS)** Lewis & Gilberte Dufour by Cecile Tardif

6:00pm SG: Raoul Chasse by a Friend

Sunday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord

8:30am ST: Deceased Relatives of Leola Gagnon

11:00am SD: Deceased Relatives of Daniel & Carol Sirois

Monday, January 10

8:30am ST: Deceased Relatives of Linda Cyr

Tuesday, January 11

6:00pm ST: **(LS)** Deceased Relatives of Rinette Madore

Wednesday, January 12

8:30am ST: Deceased Relatives of Susan Raymond

Thursday, January 13

NO MASS / St. Hilary, Bishop

Friday, January 14

NO MASS

Saturday, January 15

4:00pm ST: Donat Picard by Dick & Lorraine & Real Picard

6:00pm SG: Memorial Mass

Sunday, January 16

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30am ST: Real Daigle (1st Anniv.) by Family

11:00am SD: Aline Corriveau (1st Anniv.) by Family

****(LS) Livestream**

Our Lady of the Valley Mass Schedule

Saturday, January 8

6:00pm SA: Lewis & Lillian Gagnon by Gerard & Judy Chasse

Sunday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord

10:30am SL: Aline Corriveau by J. Paul & Cleo Ouellette

4:00pm SJ: Dick Daigle by Wife & Family

Monday, January 10

6:00pm SA: **NO MASS**

Tuesday, January 11

8:30am SJ: **NO MASS**

Wednesday, January 12

NO MASS

Thursday, January 13

St. Hilary, Bishop

6:00pm SL: Deceased relatives of Claude & Nancy Dube

Friday, January 14

NO MASS

Saturday, January 15

6:00pm SA: Tom Chamberland by Family

Sunday, January 16

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

10:30am SL: Robert Chamberland by Clarence & Betty Roy

4:00pm SJ: Deceased relatives of James & Kathryn Harris

St. Peter Chanel Mass Schedule

Saturday, January 8

4:00pm SB/SR: Edmy Lagasse by the Class of 1949

Sunday, January 9

The Baptism of the Lord

8:00am SJ: Gil Parent by Bill & Lisa Parent

9:15am SB/SR: Stephan Ouellette by John & Noreen Pelletier

Monday, January 10

NO MASS

Tuesday, January 11

NO MASS

Wednesday, January 12

5:00-6:00pm SB/SR: Adoration/Confession

6:00pm SB/SR: Normand Lajoie by Maxine & Family

Thursday, January 13

NO MASS / St. Hilary, Bishop

Friday, January 14

NO MASS

Saturday, January 15

4:00pm SB/SR: Josie Violette (1st Ann) by her Family

Sunday, January 16

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:00am SJ: Leonhard Adam (1st Ann) by his wife, Ella & Family

9:15am SB/SR: Leo Cormier by Bob & Kathleen Beaulieu



St. Hilary of Poitiers, Bishop and Doctor of the Church | January 13

Born a pagan, St. Hilary (c. 315 – c. 367) studied philosophy and the meaning of life, eventually making his way through the bible. He became a convert and was appointed bishop of Poitiers in 353. Sometimes referred to as the Hammer of the Arians, St. Hilary defended the Nicene Creed against a popular heresy, Arianism. He was exiled to Phrygia for opposing Roman emperor Constantius II, who preferred the heresy which denies Christ's divinity. From Phrygia St. Hilary fought with his pen, zealously writing against the heresy.

Eventually he was allowed to return to Poitiers, but did so by a circuitous route, preaching against Arianism all the way. St. Hilary was likely the first writer of hymns in the West, his writings on the Trinity, Psalms and Gospel of Matthew survive today. St. Hilary was created Doctor of the Church, a title given to those who provided important contributions to theology and doctrine, in 1851 by Pope Pius IX.

St. Hilary, Pray for us!

NOTRE DAME DU MONT CARMEL PARISH CORNER

St. David, St. Gerard-Mt. Carmel/Grand Isle, St. Thomas Aquinas/Madawaska

Worship & Spirituality

PRAY FOR OUR SICK

Quinn Soucy, Debra Levesque and Donna Neill. FMI please call 728-7135. **Please note that after 1 month on the list we will remove the name. You must call back if you want to be put back on. Thank you.

LAMP FOR THE UNBORN BURNS FOR:

St. David - for the Unborn by a Parishioner

St. Gerard - for Duncan James by Jeannette Brown

ST. GERARD SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN JANUARY FOR:

Deceased Relatives by Therese Cyr

ST. DAVID SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN JANUARY FOR:

Special Intention by Parishioners

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SANCTUARY LAMP BURNS IN

JANUARY FOR: George Dugal by Ginette & Family



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Tuesday, January 11th / 1pm-5:45pm
at St. Thomas Aquinas Church



INTENTION: For our priests and vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life, and for our area businesses and their workforces.

Mass Scheduling:

Anyone coming into the office to schedule a Mass needs to know that the Mass request will be booked immediately but not scheduled unless it is a 1st Anniversary Mass. The dates that Masses are scheduled will be listed in the bulletin weekly. Thanks for your understanding in this. God Bless.

††REST IN PEACE

Please pray for those who have died and for their families:

† **Adrien Pelletier, 87**, who passed away on December 19. He was a member of St. Gerard Parish.

† **Joan Hebert, 83**, who passed away on December 23. She was the wife of Reginald Hebert of our parish.

† **Robert H. Cyr, 81**, who passed away on December 29. He was the husband to Leola Cyr of our parish.

† **Ronaldo Morin, 93**, who passed away on December 30. He was a member of our parish.

FATIMA ROSARY: Recited every 13th of each month at 12pm (noon) at St. Gerard Church. All are welcomed.

2022 Contribution Envelopes: Please pick up your new contribution envelopes in the entrance of the church. If you know someone who cannot pick up their envelopes, please pick them up for these parishioners. If you have not yet registered, please stop by the parish office. Thank You.

Masks are strongly recommended for all persons attending Mass!!

Finance & Administration

Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Financial Update

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to January 2, 2022

Budget: \$171,500 **Actual:** \$174,710 **Over Anticipated:** \$3,210

	Amount given	Weekly goal
St. David	\$1,682	\$1,745
St. Gerard	\$1,114	\$1,032
St. Thomas Aquinas	\$3,235	\$3,819
Weekly Totals	\$6,031	\$6,596

WeShare Online Giving: \$422

Christmas Offering: \$3,659.90

Second Collection

January 23rd - Church of Latin America

Parish Life

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA MEETING: Monday, January 10th; Rosary at 5pm, meal at 5:15pm followed by meeting. Please bring non-perishable items for food pantry. FMI call Rose at 728-6388. **Please notice date change!!**

ST. DAVID LADIES OF ST. ANNE MEETING: Tuesday, January 18th at 2:30pm in the St. David Rectory downstairs.

DAUGHTERS OF ISABELLA PRAYER LINE: If you are in need of prayers for you or a loved one, the Daughters of Isabella can help through the Prayer Line. This is open to anyone – not only for members. To add a name to the prayer line, call **Lucy Cyr at 436-9673.**

Community Events

YOUR ST. THOMAS FOOD PANTRY IS HERE FOR YOU:

If you are struggling and need food in these difficult times, we are here for you. Applications available at Frenchville and Madawaska Town Offices. You can also pick one up when you come pick up a box. Drive by St Thomas Aquinas Church parking lot, wear mask & open trunk of your car. **Food boxes will be available on January 19th from 8-10am.** FMI call pantry at 728-7531.

GRAND ISLE SENIOR LUNCHEON: Thursday, January 13th at the Community Center. Until further notice the meals will be **TAKE OUT ONLY!!** **MENU:** Ham Steak

Grand Isle KC Breakfast: Sunday, January 16, 2022, 7:30 to 10:00am at the Community Center. Eat in or take out. Advance sale \$8.00 or \$9.00 at the door. Mask and social distancing recommended inside. Mill delivery for 7:30am. Advance tickets available from Gerald 895-6949 Bob 895-2287; George 227-1177; Gary 316-6060; or Grand Isle General Store.

Grand Isle Kitchen Party: Sunday, January 16, 2022, 1:00 to 3:00pm in the gym at the Community Center. Plenty of room for social distance. Wearing a mask is recommended and encouraged. Everyone is invited. Bring your friends. Free admission. Free snacks and refreshments. Donations always appreciated. Join us for a few hours of fun and entertainment by local talent. Sponsored by the Greater Grand Isle Historical Society.

OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY PARISH CORNER
St. Agatha, St. Joseph/Sinclair, St. Luce/Frenchville, St. Michael Chapel

Worship & Spirituality

PRAYER LINE CONTACTS

St. Joseph: Cecile Ouellette 543-6073

SANCTUARY LAMP: Burns for:

St. Agatha: Joan Belanger by Family

St. Luce: Martine, Denis, Harold, Donald, Gerry
& Donald Shields by Family

St. Joseph: Jeannette & Adrien Ouellette by Family



ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday's 5:00-6:00pm with Mass at 6:00pm at St. Agatha

Thursday's 5:00-6:00pm with Mass at 6:00pm at St. Luce

Masks are strongly recommended for all persons attending Mass!!

MEMORIAL FUND (December 2021)

St. Agatha: In Memory of: Robert Chamberland by Monica Bourgoin, Hogan Tire, Acadia Federal Credit Union (Fort Kent), Gerald & Sarah Bignotti, and SG Enterprise LLC. **Total:** \$750.00

Mass Scheduling:

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Faith
is seeing light
with your heart
when all your eyes
see is darkness

Finance & Administration

Our Lady of the Valley Financial Updates

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to December 26, 2021

Budget: \$92,500 **Actual:** \$88,676 **Under Anticipated:** -\$3,824

	Amount Given	Weekly Goal
Weekly Totals	\$ 2,474	\$4,167
	This Year	Last Year
Average Collections	\$3,411	\$3,352

WeShare Online Giving: \$280

Christmas Offering: \$3,232.50

Second Collection

January 23rd - Church of Latin America

2022 Contribution Envelopes: Please pick up your new contribution envelopes in the entrance of the church. If you know someone who cannot pick up their envelopes, please pick them up for these parishioners. If you have not yet registered, please stop by the parish office. Thank You.

††REST IN PEACE

Please pray for those who have died and for their families:

- † **Mark Dumond, 50**, who passed away on December 19. He was a member of our parish.
- † **Gerald 'Ricky' Chamberlain, 72**, who passed away on December 21. He was a member of our parish.
- † **Hermel Sirois, 89**, who passed away on December 25. He was the husband of Pierrette Sirois of our parish.
- † **Omer Bois, 86**, who passed away on January 1, 2022. He was the husband to Mona Bois formally of our parish.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

Faith Olivia Theriault

Daughter of Carroll Jr. & Anna Theriault

2021 CATHOLIC APPEAL UPDATE

Goal: \$18,695: **Total pledges to date:** \$13,489

(72% of goal) with 62 households participating.

Community Events

ST. JOSEPH FOOD PANTRY IN SINCLAIR

Serving St. Agatha, Sinclair and Cross Lake

If you are in need of food in these difficult times, we are here for you. If you are a senior you may qualify for a senior box and food box every month.

Food is given every **first Tuesday** of every month also senior box and this is a drive thru pick up, just open trunk and we will load the box of food for you. Pick up time is 1-3pm.

Please wear a mask!

FMI call Cecile Ouellette @ 543-6073 or 543-5057

Monday thru Friday from 1-4pm

Application will be completed over the phone due to COVID-19

ST. PETER CHANEL PARISH CORNER

St. Bruno-St. Remi Church/Van Buren, St. Joseph Church/Hamlin & Borderview Nursing Home

ST. BRUNO-ST. REMI CHURCH SPONSORS

BREAD & WINE SPONSOR / IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

CONRAD CYR & PHILIP (NOIR) GAGNON BY JOYCE & PHIL

SANCTUARY LAMP SPONSOR / IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

ROGER BEAULIEU BY HIS WIFE, EDWINA & FAMILY

Masks are strongly recommended for all persons attending Mass!!

Bread & Wine & Sanctuary Lamp Sponsors:

There are currently available dates for the 2022 new year for Bread & Wine (\$25) and Sanctuary Lamp (\$15) sponsors. Please consider coming in or calling the office to reserve your dates to memorialize a family member while helping to defer Parish costs.

Thank you for your consideration. God Bless.

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PARISH NEEDS / IN LOVING MEMORY:

Andre & Jacqueline Castonguay by Norman & Joanne Castonguay

St. Peter Chanel Outreach Committee News

Food Pantry News:

On call for extras and emergencies: Nancy 868-5324, Norm 498-9570, Bob 868-5623, Harvey 868-5679

Please do NOT HESITATE to call when you have or see a need.

Next Curbside Distribution: January 27th, 1-2:30pm

We are available and on call throughout the month. Please extinguish all smoking materials before checking in, and until after being loaded. Thank you for the medium sized boxes they have been a great help. We need them when we distribute shelf stable foods and have run very low.

Our pantry serves Van Buren, Cyr Plantation, Hamlin and surrounding areas.

People Helping People Thrift Store:

Note New Hours on Tuesday

HOURS: Tuesday 12-3:30pm & Wed-Friday 12-4pm.

Clothing is \$8/bag unless specially marked. **NOTE NEW PRICE**

DROP OFF OF CLOTHING SHOULD BE DONE ONLY DURING STORE HOURS. PLEASE. Thank You!!

A sincere thanks to the community for all your donations and support...we could not do this without you!

Matt 25:40 "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

SECOND COLLECTIONS/JANUARY

8/9 Heating

22/23 Latin American Missions

Finance & Administration

St. Peter Chanel Parish Financial Updates

Offertory: July 1, 2021 to December 26, 2021

Budget: \$70,000 **Actual:** \$70,916 **Over Anticipated:** \$916

Amt. Given \$2,902

Weekly Goal \$2,692

This year \$2,728

Last year \$2,708

WeShare: Online Giving: \$27

Christmas Offering: \$3,750.75



Bulletin Memorials In Loving Memory of:



Marquis & Cyr Families by Ray & Judy Marquis	Love you Aunt Mildred by your Nephew	Lajoie & Sirois families by Mike & Marie Lajoie
Janet Michaud by Lorraine Chamberland	Lorette Chasse by Glenn & Lola Martin	Kim Beaulieu Love Mom, Dad & Max
Tardif, Parent & Young Families by Ron & June & Family		Madore & Rossignol Families by Carlene & Sheila
Gilman Grandmaison by Ron & Della Martin	Antoine Levesque by his wife, Irene	Patrick Thibodeau by Yolande & Family
Paula Pelletier by Mom, Cecil & Family	St. Pierre & Marquis Families by Paul & Helen St. Pierre	Deceased Members of the Chamberland Family by Lorraine Chamberland
Gervaise Lapierre by Bob & Family	Deceased relatives of Allan and Karie Ouellette	Leonhard Adam by Ella & Sharon
Ron J. Cyr by Ken & Lorraine Fongemie	Norman Lajoie By Don & Carmen Ouellette	Betty Paradis by her Family
Deceased Members of the Madore Family by Glenn Madore	Joseph Sytulek Love, his wife, Eileen & sons Jeffrey & Gary	Martin & Deveau Families by Ron & Della Martin
Joseph Sytulek by Susan Swantek	Joey R. Ouellette by Jamie Parent	Gilman Grandmaison by Esther, Rachel, Edna, Karen & Boy

Christmas Flower Donations / Partial List / Part 1

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Pepper Martin
Fred St.Pierre
Michael Ezzy
Normand Lajoie
John Laplante
Joseph Sytulek
Normande Rossignol
Gilbert Parent

Zenzius Family
King Family
Ayotte Family
Chamberland Family
Bernier Family
Doucette Family
Lajoie Family



Raymond Lajoie
Marcella Lajoie
Herman Lajoie
Kim Beaulieu
Carline Boucher
Deceased relatives & Friends
Memere & Pepere Labreck
Ulyesse Bernier
Guy & Winnie Berube
Kim Laplante Pelletier
Mark Bard
Aurele & Irena Cyr
Martin & Lorette Parent
Ernest, Tina & Jim Marquis
Pat & Hub Pelletier
Martine Pelletier
Antoine Levesque

by Bob & Carol Ouellette
by Bob & Carol Ouellette
by Bob & Carol Ouellette
by Mom & Dad
by Bob & Carol Ouellette
by Lucien & Rachel Ouellette
by Eva & Gary
by Donna & Stacy & Family
by Donna & Stacy & Family
by Mom & Dad
by loving sister Sandra Pitre
by John Parent
by John Parent
by Rita, Marge & Family
by John & Noreen
by John & Noreen
by John & Noreen

Thank You to all who contributed!

Pastor's Corner



On the Third Sunday of Advent we can find a relationship to this weekend's Gospel reading. In those readings we find exposed some Old Testament types, in both persons and events, that shed light on the significance of John's baptism for repentance. If you simply reflect on the significance of the Jordan river in the salvation history of Israel, you will begin to understand. If you recall the double portion of the spirit of Elijah given to Elisha at the side of the Jordan, you will further begin to understand. John calls for repentance but Jesus fulfills the promise to those who repent—and so much more than double! The celebration of The Baptism of the Lord is the “exclamation point” (!) on the celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany. It is in some ways the hope for the promise of Pentecost. For me this idea appears in the words of a prayer to the Holy Spirit that can be prayed before Mass. “O Holy Spirit, by you, Jesus offered himself as the spotless victim to the Father. Being anointed and sanctified in his manhood by that substantial holiness which is the Word, he was also anointed and sanctified by you, Eternal Spirit...” It is the eternal union of the Word with the Father and the Spirit that captures my imagination. The greatest joy is in knowing of the possibility that human flesh is capable of receiving the sanctifying gift of the Eternal Spirit. “And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’” With the possibility of so deep a union with God there is the possibility of being a child of God who pleases God.

With my prayers, *Fr. Kent*

**MEMORIAL MASS INTENTIONS
Saturday, January 15 - 6:00pm St. Gerard**

Dorothy & Dean Pelletier	by Friends of the Family
Scott B. Cyr	by Gerald & Karen Cyr
Herman J. Fortin	by Gerald & Joan Baron
Herman J. Fortin	by Geraldine & Paul Brideau
Herman J. Fortin	Dorine Martin
Herman J. Fortin	Gilberte Jouvin
Herman J. Fortin	by Aldrie & Marietta Fortin & Family
Herman J. Fortin	by Jean Paul & Huguette Rioux
Herman J. Fortin	by Michael & Ester Tolleson
Raoul Chasse	by a friend
Scott B. Cyr	by Claude & Claudette Gendreau
Ken Soucy	by Richard & Jackie Snell
Favor obtained	by a Parishioner
Deceased Relatives	of Philip Beaupre
Deceased Relatives	of Robert & Verna Beaulieu
Deceased Relatives	of Claude Lavertue
Deceased Relatives	of Gerald & Angela Soucy
Deceased Relatives	of Herman & Lucienne Lavoie



ST. THOMAS GIFT SHOP

St. Thomas Aquinas Church Basement

**HOURS: Mon. - Thurs. 9am - 3pm & Friday 10am - 3pm
or by appt., Call 728-4346/316-8062 Lee**

“God cannot be surprised!”

STUFFED BEARS: 9” tall, only \$11.50 or with gift box \$13.00

BAPTISM - in white, pink or blue.

GUARDIAN ANGEL - this one has wings, comes in white, pink or blue.

CONFIRMATION - is red with a Holy Spirit on it.

FIRST COMMUNION - in white with a Chalice & Host on it.

FIRST RECONCILIATION - in purple & white.

BLESS THIS CHILD - in pink or blue.

IT'S A BOY OR IT'S A GIRL - in pink or blue.

JESUS LOVES ME - in white.

I LOVE JESUS - this one is a Holy Lamb.

GODCHILD - in pink or blue.

I LOVE YOU - in red & white.

SPECIAL GRANDDAUGHTER OR GRANDSON - in pink or blue & white.

PALLET SIGNS: 12" x 15" Wooden Pallet Signs - We have The Sacred Heart of Jesus - The Immaculate Heart of Mary - The Divine Mercy - St. Michael the Warrior. All in wonderful colors - Only \$19.95

PUZZLES: What to do in these cold (or wet), winter days - We have the solution - set up a puzzle and spend wonderful, restful, relaxing afternoons and evenings putting it together. What better way to enjoy yourself this winter!! Come see our wonderful assortment and pick one. Once put together, it can be picked up by the corners - they hold together very well!!

DOME LIGHTS: For Sister, Daughter or Friend - Battery Operated (incl) with a 6-hour timer - Only \$16.95

PENDANTS: Beautiful Variety of Crosses - Crucifixes - Miraculous Medals, Various Saints - + Others . All very reasonably priced. Come in and see what we have.

THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR CHILD IS READ ALOUD TO HIM/HER!

Also, Gift Certificates are always available!!

BAPTISMAL PREP CLASS: Saturday, January 22nd at 9:30am at the St. Thomas Center. To register for the class, please call the office at 728-7531.

PUBLIC ROSARY GROUP

(America Needs Fatima)

We meet every **Wednesday & Friday at 3:00pm** at the St. Thomas Church for the winter months. We begin with Divine Mercy Chaplet followed by the Rosary. Pray for pandemic situation and for the restoration of our country facing evil forces that is prevalent right now.



Respect for the dignity of persons is a Principle of Catholic Social Teaching and one ignored by traffickers who treat persons as commodities. Join us in abolishing this horrific crime. U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking is a 501 c (3) organization, 203 N. Geyer Road, St. Louis, MO 63131. sistersagainstrafficking.org

January 9, 2022

The Baptism of the Lord

"We are called to live our baptism every day, as new creatures, clothed in Christ." — Pope Francis

What reference point do you use when making decisions? Many times, impulse takes control and decisions are made based solely on emotion and desire. We all know that these types of decisions can often get us into trouble. When a person has a confident sense of who they are and a real understanding of what is important and of value, the likelihood of kneejerk impulsive choices diminishes. Baptism gives us what we need to make well informed and purposeful decisions. By this simple gesture, God claims us as His own and provides us with the identity and purpose we need to properly live life.

It is tremendously reassuring, when we truly embrace this revelation and realize that we no longer have to wonder about the purpose of our lives or struggle to find our way. The answer of who we are in God has been given to us. We no longer have to fumble around, trip over ourselves or walk aimlessly about. Issues surrounding the sacredness of life, the meaning of death, the protection of those most vulnerable, care for the weak and the poor, offering hospitality to those in search of a home, the purpose and proper place of work, how to create a just social order, caring for creation, and understanding our roles as heralds and stewards are just a few of the wonderful gifts baptism brings. When we make decisions based on things such as these core Gospel truths we really act as Christ himself, revealing to others the new creations that we are. This is how we live our baptism.

It is difficult to walk against the tide. Yet, that is precisely what baptism calls us to do. Although we are sinners, in need of mercy and far from perfection we are called to order our life and make decisions based upon the wisdom and guidance of Almighty God. He alone is the one who can claim us as His sons and daughters. Standing up for our principles will not make us popular. But who ever said Christianity is a popularity contest? Baptism calls us to stand up for that which goes against the grain of secularism. Standing in line with other sinners, we have our anchor to steady us in the tempests of life and God is very pleased. Forge ahead. There is nothing to fear.

Baptismal Bib

Question:

At my grandson's Baptism, the priest put a bib on the baby. I do not remember seeing this before. Why is this done? Is it something new?

Answer:

When an adult is baptized, there is a part in the ceremony when the newly baptized is vested in a white garment. It is symbolic of the changes that baptism brings in the life of the baptized as they are freed from the bonds of sin and brought into the saving grace of Christ. Realities that are so profound are symbolically presented so that we might better grasp and understand them.

Infants are often dressed in a baptismal dress, which is the baptismal garment. In some places, the bib is used as a kind of baptismal garment. At the place in the ceremony where the investiture takes place, the bib is used. Some are poncho-like and fit over the baby's head. Others are simply placed on the baby's chest. If the baby is dressed in a white garment, nothing else is needed. The prayer says it all: "See in your white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity ... bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven." In baptism, we are given our purpose and goal in life as believers and this is symbolized by the white garment.

I Hope I Am Like Him

"Who is this Christ? Is he like you?"

Perhaps you've heard this story, often attributed to the life of St. Teresa of Calcutta. A sick man asked her this question, as he marveled at her tireless service to himself and others in the name of someone named Jesus Christ.

"He is nothing like me," the saint is said to have answered. "But I hope I am like him."

Though the authenticity of this exchange cannot be verified, its message rings perfectly true: all the value of our stewardship lies in its relativity to the one in whose name we perform it.

Consider the figure of John the Baptist — a magnificent, towering character even purely from a literary or historical perspective. A martyr who fed on wild locusts and boldly spoke truth to power — a man so great some mistook him for the Messiah.

But why is he great? Because he prepared the way. All his accomplishments and escapades mean nothing if they are taken out of the context of salvation history. He only makes sense relative to Christ — and this is exactly as he wanted it. "One worthier than I is coming," he insists. And because of that humility and that total embrace of God's will, he is given one of the greatest honors in the New Testament — he baptizes the Son of God.

Children's Corner

PUZZLE

Find and circle these words from today's Gospel:

JOHN
MESSIAH
BAPTIZING

WATER
POWERFUL
SANDALS

HOLY SPIRIT
FIRE
JESUS

A	J	T	U	A	R	B	Y	W	E	N
H	O	L	Y	S	P	I	R	I	T	O
E	H	A	I	T	O	S	U	F	A	M
J	N	E	G	Y	W	A	T	E	R	E
I	Y	B	E	H	E	U	P	L	M	S
H	S	I	N	U	R	M	O	A	Y	S
J	U	P	A	W	F	I	R	E	C	I
E	M	O	Z	T	U	Y	M	S	U	A
S	A	N	D	A	L	S	E	O	T	H
U	D	Y	T	O	E	A	N	G	E	D
S	O	B	A	P	T	I	Z	I	N	G

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