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"I HAVE BAPTIZED YOU WITH WATER; HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT." - MK 1:8

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

SUNDAY'S READINGS

FIRST READING:

Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call him while he is near.
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked man his thoughts;
Let him turn to the LORD for mercy,
to our God, who is generous in forgiving (Is 55:6-7)

PSALM:

You will draw water joyfully from the springs of
salvation. (Is 12:3)

SECOND READING:

This is the one who came through water and blood,
Jesus Christ,
not by water alone, but by water and blood. (1 Jn 5:6)

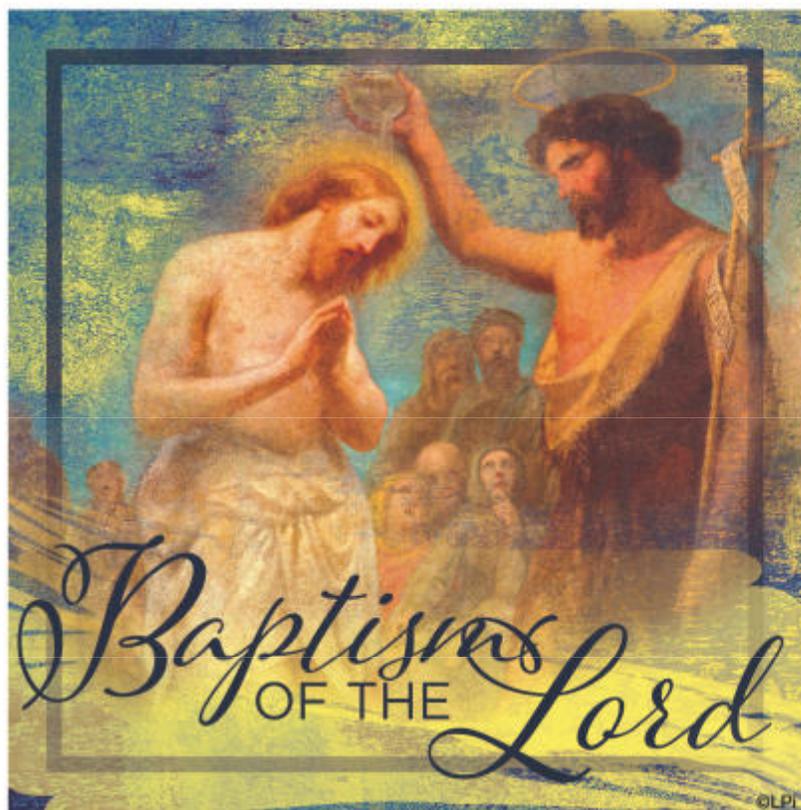
GOSPEL:

And a voice came from the heavens,
"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."
(Mk 1:11)

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OBSERVANCES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 10, 2021

Sunday: The Baptism of the Lord
Wednesday: St. Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Next Sunday: 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



REFLECT

FIRST READING

Isaiah was called to be a prophet to bring justice and freedom to those suffering, to be a "light for the nations." How do you see yourself serving others in need in your life?

SECOND READING

John teaches his community that God Himself has "testified on behalf of His Son." In what way does this divine assurance help strengthen your faith?

GOSPEL READING

The preaching of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus is the opening scene in the Gospel of Mark. In Jesus' baptism, the Father, Son, and Spirit were fully present. As a baptized Christian, can you think of a time when you experienced God's presence?

WHEN GOD WHISPERS

"You don't need to shout. My hearing works just fine."

Are you a parent that has used that one on your kids? I'm not sure at what age they realize that the volume of their voice doesn't correlate to the likelihood of receiving a favorable reply — it might be sometime in the teenage years, when the talking slows down altogether.

But I've got to admit, it would be nice if God always gave us a loud and dramatic sign when He wanted something — the booming voice and the torn-open heavens ("This is my beloved Son!") really get the message across. Sometimes I find myself envious of the Apostles, who were able to witness such things in person.

The fact of the matter is, in the year 2021, God is more likely to speak in a whisper than in a shout. The prophet Isaiah forewarns that Christ himself will not be a noisemaker — for all his preaching, he will not cry out or shout to bring forth justice to the nations. His way is altogether different than that.

We are not the Apostles, and we do not have the privilege of seeing the Holy Spirit descend on Christ like a dove. But here's the good news: God doesn't need to shout. Our spiritual hearing works just fine. We just have to be listening.

Let's wake up each morning ready to hear God's whispers throughout the day. Let's make a conscious effort to invite those whispers into our hearts, where they can become a catalyst for grace in this world.

—Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

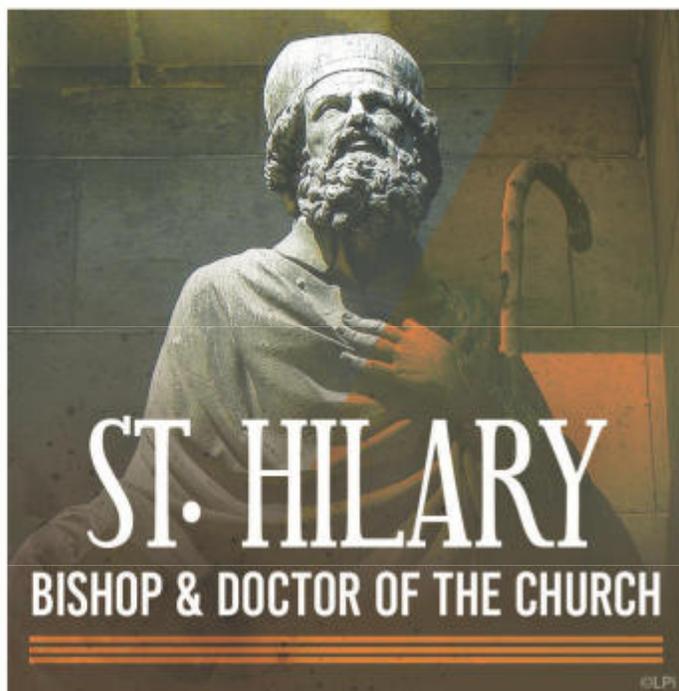
WHY DO WE HOLD HANDS DURING THE OUR FATHER?

The practice of members of the assembly holding hands while praying the Lord's Prayer during the Mass is a custom that developed organically in the 1970s and 1980s. While some commentators acknowledge that the practice varies from place to place, it is a fairly universal reality in parishes across the United States. For some, this action symbolizes the communion of Christians praying together as one family of believers honoring the Father of All. Critics of the practice sometimes express concern that holding hands can be a distraction from the more significant unity that is experienced when we process to the altar to receive sacramental communion.

And so, we're left to ask, what is the answer?

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (the document that offers specific instructions for the celebration of the Mass) is silent on the practice, saying only that "all the faithful say the prayer" with the priest. The website of the US Bishops simply observes that "No position is prescribed in the Roman Missal for an assembly gesture during the Lord's Prayer." And so, we're left to discern within

ourselves and within our parish and religious communities what is an authentic gesture of praise during this important point of the Mass. For some, this means continuing to hold hands, while for others, this may mean adopting another posture of prayer.



LIVE THE LITURGY

INSPIRATION FOR THE WEEK

We carry a greater depth of self-confidence and chance of succeeding when we have affirmation, a sense of direction and clear purpose in life. Each of these serve to provide our lives with meaning, allowing us to clearly establish priorities and goals. They also are necessary for integrity, which is the conviction and single mindedness that keeps us grounded in the truth of who we are. "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Jesus' baptism provides him with exactly what he needs to get about the business of his mission as the Son of God. He is given what he needs to be successful in fulfilling the purpose for which he was sent. Our baptisms give us these same gifts. We receive the affirmation we need from God, knowing that we are one of his beloved daughters and sons. We are gifted with the direction and clear purpose we need in order to be productive stewards and faithful Christians. Are we ready and willing to answer the call?

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FUTURE
STARTS
TODAY,
NOT
TOMORROW."

ST. JOHN PAUL II

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BAPTISM OF THE LORD



GOSPEL MEDITATION

ENCOURAGE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE

We need history. We need it in order to understand ourselves, personally and collectively. The pieces of our histories may not have always been the most positive, honest, exemplary, dignified, proud and best moments of our lives, but they are ours. We have to acknowledge, remember, accept, and often heal them. We cannot forget them or pretend that they never existed. As horrible as the atrocities of events like Auschwitz, brutal injustices committed throughout the human journey, or personal painful experiences in our own stories, we need to remember. These times when humanity in general or people in particular have lost their way are times that need to be reconciled and redeemed.

If we lose the memories, we will make the same mistakes again. The human soul needs a strong sense of affirmation, direction, and clear purpose. Without these essentials, we will easily run a muck and repeat the sins of our past. God's voice throughout history has spoken precisely about this! We are reminded through the voices and example of many prophets and witnesses not to make the same mistakes again, come back to center, discover the purpose given to us by God, maintain a sense of proper direction, seek healing for wounds



and be reconciled to our Creator.

Baptism is so incredibly important for the salvation of humankind, not only eternally but here and now. Our existence depends upon it. It gives us the affirmation we need from God by gifting us with the same intimate relationship Jesus had with the Father. We are blessed with the direction and clear purpose we need in order to be productive stewards and faithful Christians. Baptism calls us to remember, accept, and deal with the sins and inequities of our past regardless of how hurtful and serious. We consciously choose to turn away from them and put on the new life of Christ. To do this well, we must look hard and long at our sins and failings, listen to what they

are saying and learn from them. If we ignore the past, collectively or personally, or pretend that it never happened, we will never grow. We will surely die.

People need to hear the message, lived and spoken, delivered by the baptized members of the Body of Christ. It is an essential message of hope that is layered with visions of justice, peace, reconciliation, redemption, blessing, and healing. It is a message that helps us remember what has gone before, the graces and the sins, and bring ourselves by God's help where we need to be. We are called to do much more than sit home behind our closed doors. We have a message to deliver. Are we ready to do so?

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." - Mk 1:9-11

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3 EASY STEPS

TO KEEPING YOURSELF & OTHERS HEALTHY!

We are cautioned to be especially careful during the Coronavirus outbreak. Here are some simple ways to keep sickness away.



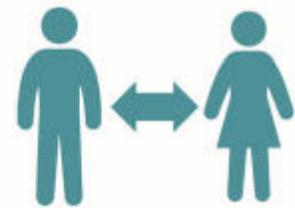
WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. If you can't wash your hands, use hand sanitizer frequently.



DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE

Especially around the eyes, nose and mouth. If you must sneeze, use a tissue or your arm.



KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Practice social distancing during this epidemic and stay away from large groups. Instead, call, email or check up on family and friends using social media.



Kids Corner

READ THE
GOSPEL &
COLOR



“Keep trying. You’re doing great. I’m so proud of you.” Every child should hear words like that. Every child wants to feel God’s love. As Jesus grew from a boy to a man, he showed he was ready to live for God. At Jesus’ baptism, God told Jesus, “You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you.” God loves you as his child, too.

PRAYER

God, I am so glad you love me.

MISSION FOR THE WEEK

Be careful to use kind words with your family and friends.



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

Monday, Jan 11, 2021 **FIRST WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME**

Today is the first weekday of Ordinary Time—that period in the church’s liturgical year after the close of the Christmas season that stretches until Ash Wednesday (and then picks up after Pentecost until Advent begins again). This time after the holidays can indeed seem “ordinary,” when all the commotion dies down and all the decorations are put away. Some people, especially those who live with long, cold winters, might even feel a little blue. But while sacred seasons are important, getting down to business is too. After all, there’s a reign of God to help build. Think about everything Jesus did between the bookends of his life that we celebrate—and roll up your sleeves for some extraordinary work.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 1:1-6; Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday, Jan 12, 2021

The Holy Name of Jesus is a devotion that was championed by Saint Bernardino of Siena in the 1400s—with the Holy Name Society dating to the 1200s. As a feast day, it’s been celebrated during the first week of January by various Christian denominations and by Catholic religious orders, most notably the Jesuits, who use a monogram of the name (IHS) as their emblem. For Catholics, the entire month of January is dedicated to the Holy Name of Jesus. Pray the of the Holy Name of Jesus today, recalling how even the unclean spirits of Jesus’ day recognized his name.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 2:5-12; Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday, Jan 13, 2021 **OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF HILARY, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**

Catholics of the 21st century profess the belief that Jesus is both human and divine every time we recite the Nicene Creed at Mass. However, that profession of faith was challenged mightily in the fourth century when followers of Arius argued that Jesus was a great man—but not God. The conflict involved bishops and emperors on both sides and it went on for years. Hilary of Poitiers converted to Christianity at the age of 35 and was elected a bishop three years later. Hilary was a friendly and courteous man who persistently championed belief in Jesus’ divinity. Even exile did not silence his voice. In our own times of conflict and division, Saint Hilary, guide us to God’s grace.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 2:14-18; Mark 1:29-39

Thursday, Jan 14, 2021

Jesus heals a leper in today’s gospel. Leprosy is relatively rare now in most regions of the world, so it’s hard to understand the fear and revulsion that people with this disease triggered at one time. Even someone as close to God as Saint Francis struggled to be comfortable with touching a leper. Every age has its outcasts, and the Christian challenge has always been to learn to accept those others find unacceptable, love those others find unlovable. Prisoners, poor people, those with dark skin or foreign accents, the homeless—the list of modern lepers is long. Who do you avoid? Acknowledging your aversion is a step toward acceptance.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 3:7-14; Mark 1:40-45

Friday, Jan 15, 2021

Today in Guatemala, a major religious procession honors an image of Christ on the cross carved from dark wood and renowned throughout the region as the “Black Christ of Esquipulas.” The statue was commissioned by Spanish colonial leaders looking to convert the indigenous people who worshipped a dark-skinned deity. Today the image affirms the fact that in Latin America there has been a certain “fluidity between races through inter-marriage and more blending of cultures and religions when compared to the experience of Native Americans and African Americans,” as El Paso Bishop Mark J. Seitz wrote in a remarkable pastoral letter on the history of racism, *Night Will Be No More*. Today would be a good day to dip into this document for insights into the history and persistence of racism, regionwide. May the Black Christ be a symbol of hope!

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 4:1-5, 11; Mark 2:1-12

Saturday, Jan 16, 2021 **OPTIONAL MEMORIAL OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

The great paradox of God’s kingdom is often expressed in the teachings of Jesus: The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the last are first, the dead live. The first and most profound paradox is that the Virgin conceives. Our Blessed Mother experienced the coming Kingdom in her own body. She shares that experience with us in our communion with the Lord. We carry the Real Presence of the Savior in our own bodies. The ongoing paradox is that the Lord calls us, who are sinners, to be the vessels of his presence in the world. Express that presence today by lifting up the lowly.

TODAY’S READINGS: Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 2:13-17

January

enero

Mass Intentions

Weekend of January 9th & 10th
The Baptism of the Lord

✧ Larry Byron
For the People of St Stevens
✧ Deceased Members of
St Stevens Ladies Guild

Monday January 11th
✧ Molly McDermott

Tuesday January 12th
✧ Diane Brass

Wednesday January 13th
✧ Ann Call

Thursday January 14th
✧ Joan Arouni

Friday January 15th
✧ Albert John Imbornoi

Weekend of January 16th & 17th
2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

✧ Leighton Nickerson
For the People of St Stevens
✧ Oranda Nichols



Updated news concerning the Fr. Arens Knights of Columbus Council # 9678 at St. Steven's Catholic Church.



Recently, after consultation with the District Deputy, the current Grand Knight (who resigned in December) and our Parish Manager (Former Grand Knight), it was decided that a time of suspension is necessary for the current council to reflect, reexamine and institute the newest guidelines for the council from both the National and State level of the Organization. Even though these guidelines have been in place for over two years, our current council has maintained a “status quo” and not fully adopted the essential elements of the new guidelines. Precisely, the institution of the Faith in Action programs that are now required components of each council. Through this initiative, the Order endeavors to support Christian family life and encourages councils and families to integrate with the sacramental and social life of their parish more fully. *

“Being a Knight is more than camaraderie, it is being involved in your community; it is supporting your local Catholic Church, while enhancing your own faith and it is about protecting and enhancing your family life. Below are programs that have been mandated for current councils:

- † Spiritual Reflection Program –Under the guidance of their chaplain, each council must plan opportunities for prayer and reflection together as a fraternity. Councils can attend a retreat or day of reflection together or perhaps organize their own event for the men of their parish. *
- † In his Apostolic Exhortation Into the Breach, Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted outlines the challenges faced by men of faith in the world today. Into the Breach is a call to battle for Catholic men which urges them to wholeheartedly embrace masculine virtues in a world at crisis. By reading and discussing Bishop Olmsted’s inspirational words and the accompanying study guide with like-minded men of faith, councils will prayerfully examine the enormous breach in the battle line that lies before them. In doing so, they will begin to devise a personal plan of spiritual battle. *
- † Holy Hour–Councils work with their pastors to organize regular holy hours of Eucharistic adoration. K of C holy hours could be prepared for men, complete with preaching, a communal rosary, and prayers to St. Joseph and Fr. McGivney. *
- † Sacramental Gifts–Councils are present for the most important sacramental events in the lives of families. Through special gifts and prayers, a council can support the family at these times and build a closer relationship with the parish community. *
- † Consecration to the Holy Family–Councils invite families of their parish to offer the prayer of Consecration to the Holy Family through which families invoke the protection of the Holy Family. A traditional recommendation is that this takes place on the feast of the Holy Family, typically the first Sunday after Christmas.” *

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During this hiatus, we ask the entire parish to pray along with all those that are Knights to pray, reflect and even update their knowledge of the Knights of Columbus organization which is readily available either through the national or state websites. Our intention is not to terminate, but to revitalize, regroup, and rebuild our council instituting all the guidelines currently in force.



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