

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

## The Baptism of the Lord.

January 10, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor

For the time being, our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM. Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 ft. between people of different households).

### Ist Reading:

**Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7**

Thus, says the LORD:  
Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching. I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

*The Word of the Lord.*

### Responsorial Psalm:

**"The Lord will bless his people with peace."**

Give to the LORD, you sons of God, give to the LORD glory and praise, Give to the LORD the glory due his name; adore the LORD in holy attire.

R.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters, the LORD, over vast waters. The voice of the LORD is mighty; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

R.

The God of glory thunders, and in his temple all say, "Glory!" The LORD is enthroned above the flood; the LORD is enthroned as king forever.

R.

### 2nd Reading:

**Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38**

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Lector: Alleluia, alleluia.**

**All: Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Lector:** John saw Jesus approaching him, and said: Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**All: Alleluia, alleluia.**

### Gospel: **Mark 1:7-11**

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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."  
*The Gospel of the Lord.*

### Acclamation:

When we eat this **BREAD** and drink this **CUP**, we proclaim your **DEATH**, O Lord, until **YOU COME AGAIN.**

The Lord is near to  
all who call on him

Please continue to pray for all those who are in poor health; in particular, for **Daphne Stone** and for **Michael Gordon** — who are both recovering from surgery.

\*\*\*\*\*

Please continue to pray for the **eternal repose** of **+Gail Inman**, and for **+Joseph P. Fendrick**.

\*\*\*\*\*

**+Joseph Fendrick** passed away at his home in Las Vegas on December 16, 2020. He was laid to rest in the Ghio-Fendrick family crypt at Holy Cross Mausoleum in San Diego on December 28th, 2020. Joseph served at Saint Thomas Indian Mission by playing the piano on Sundays at the 9:30/10:30 AM Masses during the pastorate of Fr. Rusty.

### POST-COVID-19 SKED:

Once we are back to public worship inside the church, our schedule will be as follows:

#### Sunday Masses

(We follow Arizona Time):

**Saturday 4:30 PM**

**Sunday 9:30 AM**

**Note:** Each Mass will be preceded by Confessions and a Holy Hour before the Exposed Blessed Sacrament.

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD . . . . GUIDEPOSTS

### FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Today's Feast marks the conclusion of the Christmas Season and the beginning of Ordinary Time. It inaugurates Jesus' public ministry. As such it also echoes the theme of the Epiphany in that the Baptism of the Lord is another manifestation announcing Jesus' divinity to all of His first followers and to the disciples of John the Baptist.

\*\*\*\*\*

It needs to be pointed out that Jesus did not need the baptism of John. John was baptizing as a call to and sign of interior repentance. Jesus had no need to repent. But, nonetheless, Jesus comes to John. John resists at first but Jesus insists. So, we ask the question: **WHY DID JESUS PRESENT HIMSELF FOR BAPTISM?**

#### ***First, because through the Baptism, God Himself proclaims Jesus' divinity.***

The baptism of Jesus is meant to reveal that He is the Christ ("anointed one")—the Spirit-endowed Servant promised by Isaiah in today's First Reading. It is a clarification of who Jesus is. He is God's Son, His beloved, with whom the Father is well pleased. After the Baptism, there would be no question about Jesus' identity.

Jesus' identity had already been revealed to us in Luke's gospel when the angel told Mary at the annunciation that she would conceive her child through the power of the Holy Spirit and he would be holy and would be called Son of God. Jesus' identity was also revealed when Jesus was lost in the temple for three days and when he was found he said to his parents "why were you looking for me? Didn't you know I must be in my Father's house?"

But his identity was hidden from everybody else. It was only when Jesus was baptized and God announced to the world "This is my beloved Son" and the Spirit came down upon him that the world was to know who he was.

#### ***Second, because through His Baptism, Jesus shows His solidarity with sinners.***

This is the other answer to the question: Why did Jesus need to be baptized? When John the Baptist asks this question, Jesus responds by saying, "To fulfill all righteousness." Scholars interpret this remark as showing Jesus' solidarity with sinners, those for whom he had been sent, even though he himself did not sin.

\*\*\*\*\*

May we see Jesus revealed today in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in each other so that, as we NOW return to Ordinary Time, we live as Christians. Baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered to carry on Jesus' mission, let us put our faith into action . . . . May God be well pleased.

Jesus' baptism not only clarified for all the world who Jesus was, but it also gave Jesus his mission. As detailed in the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah (first reading), Jesus was to be a covenant of the people and a light for the nations. Especially he was called to establish justice on the earth.

Justice here means "righteousness." It means fidelity to God, goodness, living up to what we know God wants of us. As Jesus will demonstrate in his public ministry, Christian justice is one which goes deeper than the letter of the law; it goes to the spirit of the law. It is justice with mercy, that is to say, merciful justice.

### OUR BAPTISM GIVES US OUR IDENTITY TOO

Today's Gospel tells us that as Jesus came up from the water, he heard the voice of God the Father make his identity clear to all present: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This is what happens at our baptism too. When we come up from the waters of Baptism, the Church makes it clear that we are: "Christians now, and Christ has welcomed us into his holy people."

As Christians, we are called to live in the way Jesus taught us. Our identity as members of his Body is to be shaped or informed by his words and actions, summed up best in the law of loving God and neighbor.

The word *identity* comes from a word meaning "identical." By virtue of our baptism we are called to be identical to Jesus in our manner of living, our treatment of others, and our faithfulness to God's commands.

So often we forget who we are and that we are God's beloved. Through baptism we have been defined forever as God's children and the only one who can deface or destroy that dignity that has been given to us is we, ourselves.

Pope Francis encourages us: "Being Christian is not just obeying orders but means being in Christ, thinking like him, acting like him, loving like him; it means letting him take possession of our life and change it, transform it, and free it from the darkness of evil and sin."

So, today, we should ask questions about our own baptism. Do we in any way involve the fact of our baptism in defining who we are and what we are capable of, or was baptism just something that happened to us as a child?

We conclude with the following quotation or warning from Bishop Fulton Sheen: "***If you do not behave as you believe, you will end up believing as you behave.***"

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

### **CELEBRANT:**

We confess that Jesus is the Messiah of God, anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. We pray that this Spirit will be active among us.

### **LECTOR:**

1) That the Lord will send his Spirit upon bishops, priests, writers, and teachers, and on all who are heard by many within the Church, and make them announce the Gospel boldly and faithfully, *we pray to the Lord.*

2) For those whose lives have been adversely affected by those who call themselves Christians but do not act as followers of Christ . . . and for those who struggle to understand the interface between the Gospel and complex social issues or politics, *we pray to the Lord.*

3) For all Christians, as we begin the week of prayer for Christian unity at the end of this week: May we acknowledge our common baptism and find ways to work together as one body of Christ, *we pray to the Lord.*

4) That God's consoling and strengthening Spirit will come to victims of violence, to those who are suffering from COVID-19 and other illnesses, to lonely old people, to young people faced with death, and to all who find their lives in ruins, *we pray to the Lord.*

5) That we, members of this faith community, live up to our baptismal promises, and creatively share our faith with family members and friends, co-workers and neighbors, through our words, actions, parish ministries and contributions, *we pray to the Lord.*

6) For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts (PAUSE FOR A FEW SECONDS), *we pray to the Lord.*

### **CELEBRANT:**

Heavenly Father, we are your beloved children. May you be well pleased in us as we strive to carry on the mission of your Son. Hear our prayers and grant them in the name of your beloved Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



### **COLLECTIONS FOR PARISH SUPPORT:**

**Via Mail & Mass:** January 2-3, 2021: **\$1,084**

**Via Online:** Dec. 29, 2020 to Jan. 3, 2021: **\$435**

*Lest we forget . . . Laughter is Medicine!*

### **Baptism/Nominal Christians (Driving Away Bats)**

One time three pastors were discussing about bat-infestation in their churches.

"I got so mad," said one, "I took a shotgun and fired at them. Some got killed but the majority are still up there."

"I tried pesticide spray," said the second priest, "but those damn bats gave birth to new ones."

"I haven't had any more problems," said the third priest.

"What did you do?" asked the interested two.

"I simply baptized them," he replied. "I haven't seen them in church since then."

## **TO ALL WHO REGULARLY ATTEND MASS AT ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION:**

We welcome those who would like to express their spirituality as lectors and/or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion at our Masses. Returnees as well as newcomers to the above ministries are most welcome. We need more volunteers so that each lector or communion minister may need to serve only once every two weeks or even once in three weeks if many more are involved. Please call me or email me at [georgedecasa@gmail.com](mailto:georgedecasa@gmail.com)

### **The requirements:**

To be assigned as Lector and/or Minister of Holy Communion, one must be a practicing Catholic, that is to say, among other things, that the person is living a life in good standing with the Catholic Church, regularly attends Sunday Mass, and is able to receive Holy Communion.

Moreover, per diocesan guideline because of the COVID-19 threat, Ministers of Communion must be below 65 years of age and healthy.

There is no age limit for Lectors as long as they are healthy and physically able, that is, can approach the ambo/lectern without any need of physical assistance.

As much as possible we assign three lectors for each Mass so that in the event that not all three are present, the one present is prepared to cover for the others. If all three are present,

**Lector 1** proclaims the first reading and responsorial psalm;

**Lector 2** proclaims the second reading and alleluia;

**Lector 3** leads the Prayers of the Faithful.

As the need to cover for someone may arise at the last minute, each Lector is hereby expected to come to Mass prepared, that is, to have read and familiarize themselves with all the readings beforehand.

**A PRIEST** was asked by a politician, "Name one thing the government can do to help the church." The priest replied, "Quit making small bills."

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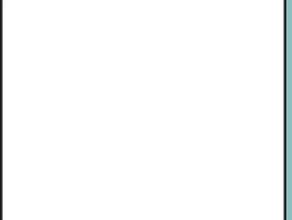
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