

## BAPTISM OF THE LORD, CYCLE B

*Isaiah 55: 1-11 + Psalm 29: 1-4, 9-10 + 1 John 5: 1-9 + Mark 1: 7-11*

Holy Spirit Catholic Church: January 11, 2015

Why spend your money for what is not bread, your wages for what fails to satisfy?  
We are no different from the people of Isaiah's day.  
We think this thing or that thing will satisfy our hunger,  
but we find ourselves still hungry, still dissatisfied.  
We are like a kid 2 weeks after Christmas—the toys he thought would bring him  
lasting happiness are pushed to the side, and he is looking for something more.  
Except as adults, we waste our wages on bigger toys,  
but nothing ever seems to fill the hole in the soul, nothing ever quenches our thirst.

We are hungry for God, hungering for God, and nothing but God can satisfy that hunger.  
For we who are hungering for God, we need not waste our wages,  
for we do not need to pay for the freely given gift of the bread come down from heaven,  
Jesus, the Christ.  
So the Lord invites us to come and drink of His love and experience new life:  
Come to the water, all you who are thirsty.

With the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we conclude this Christmas Season.  
The Scripture readings gleam with the glory of this Season,  
when God became human to feed our hunger for union with God.  
The word of God that we break open today reveals  
how Christmas is connected to Easter.  
The birth and life and death and resurrection of Christ are all necessary  
to seal the everlasting covenant God has made with humankind.

The One who was born that we might no longer die forever,  
the One whose birth has given us new life  
and whose death has destroyed the power of death---he is the One who seeks us out  
to feed us with His love, to share with us His life.

The Sacraments of the Church usher us into this life-giving, thirst-quenching,  
hunger-satisfying relationship with God through Christ in the Spirit.  
Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation---traditionally called the Sacraments of Initiation—  
draw us into the eternal covenant the Triune God has made with humankind,  
to love us always and share with us divine life.  
In the waters of baptism, we died with Christ, and rose with him to new life,  
as adopted children of God.

We drank of the water of new life and entered into a new relationship with God and with all the baptized as a member of the family of God.

Beloved by God, the favor of God rests upon us.

We no longer need to go on a frustrating search, looking for love in all the wrong places, because love has found us.

The Son of God, born in a rush of blood and water from the womb of Mary, is born again on the cross when the soldier's spear opens up his side---

blood and water rush forth, signs of the sacramental life of the Church.

The free and complete gift of his life on the cross opens the door for us into the house of God, to dwell with God forever.

At every Eucharist, when we drink from the cup of the New Covenant, drinking of the Blood of Christ, we renew the Covenant of our baptism.

So, we rise up from the waters of new life in order to come to the table of the Lord, to celebrate his life-giving death until the end of time, to drink of his life poured out for us.

Jesus Christ is the Living Bread come down from heaven

who satisfies our hunger for God and as we receive Him, the life of God grows in us.

The Lord's mercies are renewed in us each time we eat and drink of his

Body and Blood, and we remember who we are—God's beloved sons and daughters.

Sealed by the same Spirit which tears open the heavens, uniting heaven and earth, we are confirmed in the new life in Christ.

Our life in the Spirit, sealed at Confirmation, is nourished over and over again at every Eucharist.

As we come streaming forward to receive the One for whom we hunger and thirst, we renew our commitment to Jesus Christ, to make him the center of our life, our heart's number one desire.

The way God made us, we need to constantly renew our commitment to Him.

That's why the weekly celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is so central to our faith—it is the way that we renew our commitment to hold up our end of the covenant sealed in the blood of Christ.

We do not practice our faith in private, all alone.

In order to believe, and to nourish and strengthen our belief in God's goodness and love, we do so as members of a community of faith.

Those who come to the life-giving waters of baptism are not left on their own, but come to the table of the Lord with others.

Together, we help each other renew our part of the covenant and we help one another to be faithful to the One whose faithfulness to us is everlasting.

Like Jesus, our baptism is the foundational event of our life,  
for from baptism flows our true identity.

With the beloved Son of God, we were adopted into God's family  
as beloved sons and daughters.

So that even when we feel empty, we can be full of the knowledge that we are still  
God's beloved sons and daughters.

Even as we live in a world which is not safe, where acts of violence can take our loved  
ones from our sides or even do harm to our own life, we still know who we are—beloved.

Even when we are powerless in the face of sickness or other suffering,  
we, like the Beloved Son on the cross, can still cry out, "*Abba, Father*"

because we are still God's beloved sons and daughters.

But we need the help of each other, as brothers and sisters in the family of God, to remind  
one another of our God-given dignity, of our eternal status as beloved children of God.

Too often we focus only on our failures and shortcomings, and forget who we are.

Others wake us up to the divine presence residing in us.

About a month ago, a young boy was leaving church after Mass, and as he scooted by  
me, he said, "*Bye, God.*" Then, as he went by Deacon Paul, he said, "*Bye, Jesus.*"

Deacon Paul and I looked at each other and laughed, but afterwards I thought of the gift  
the little child had given, pointing out the divine dwelling within us.

Alone we too often forget who we are, but with others, we remember.

On our own it is difficult to remain true to who we are, but with others help,  
we can remain faithful to our God-given identity.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord teaches us that our faith  
is about more than adoring a cute infant in a manger.

The life of faith means engaging in a adult relationship with the Son of God  
who asks something of us. He wants to teach us how to live as a beloved child of God.

Jesus' way of living needs to become our way of living,  
his mission become our mission.

He asks us to follow him by continuing his mission of giving himself to a world  
that hungers for him.

He gives himself to others in and through us.

In this way we fulfill our mission by continuing the divine presence on earth.