



## Liturgy Suggestions

*"I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20*

### **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Sunday, January 11, 2009**

Beginning with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, the Church sets aside one week each year to specifically focus on the call to live out the gifts that God has given to us, and how He calls us to share those gifts with the world. Simply, God leads us on the path that we may be saints, unified with Him forever in Heaven. The program for a life of sanctity is achieved by striving for a life of virtue, for God has designed us to be virtuous. As we strive for holiness, God will lead each of us down the unique pathway that is set before the individual, leading to a life of profound happiness, for it is a happiness that is established in Christ, and not in the fleeting trappings of this world.

### **Greeting**

God continually pours out His Blessings upon those who ask, upon those who are marked with His seal. As we gather to celebrate the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, we recognize the times that we have failed to live up our call to be 'beloved sons and daughters' of God, and ask for His forgiveness and mercy.

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to the Father: Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you have given us the consolation of the Truth: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd, leading us into everlasting life: Lord, have mercy.

### **Readings**

Lectionary #21B:

First Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6

Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-9

Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

### **Homily Suggestion:**

*Called to be Saints*

When I was a little boy, 5 or 6 years old, my family lived across the street from a little girl who was about my age. And while I liked to climb the big magnolia tree in the front yard or play games that involved throwing something or running somewhere, Robin, the little girl across the street, wanted to play a game called "house." As in she would tell me, "Let's play house. You be the daddy and I'll be the mommy." Which basically involved her pretending to prepare some kind of meal in an Easy-Bake Oven and me pretending to eat and drink from a little tea set of some kind and disciplining some misbehaving teddy bears or something.

I did not care for that game, but it always came with the promise that we'd play football or hide-and-seek afterwards. I only fell for it a few times.

But what we were doing with that little tea set and the Playskool Kitchenette was not just pretending, but preparing. We were using our imaginations to reach beyond our limited experience to try out what it would be like to be a grown up. We had no direct experience of what being a grown up was, but we had some ideas about it, and we were trying them out. We had no idea what we were going to be when we grew up, but we were preparing. That's what imagination is for. It let's us try out things before we actually have to do them.

Today, I have a better idea of what I want to be when I grow up. But you know what? God's not finished with me yet. No, He's not. And God's not finished with you, yet, either. Because compared to what God has planned for us, no one in this church, no one in this city, no one in this world has become a grown up yet. Not really.

Have you ever gone to the garden department of your favorite grocery or big box retailer? You can get these little Burpee seed packets. They have seed packets for everything. They have cucumbers, and carrots. They have squash and tomatoes and watermelons. They have green peppers and red peppers and yellow peppers. But of course they're not green or yellow or red peppers. They're not squash or tomatoes or watermelons. They're not cucumbers or carrots.

Not yet.

They're seeds.

You can't actually eat the peppers or carrots or cucumbers or watermelons unless something else happens first. You have to prepare the soil, and make sure there's plenty of space for the root system to go in deep. And plant the seeds in the ground. And you have to put them where they'll get the right amount of sunlight, not too much, and not too little. And you have to water them, not too much and not too little. And you have to pull up the weeds. And you have to make sure the insects don't eat them before you get a chance to.

Then, maybe, if you do all the right things at the exact right time, and you're blessed with a little bit of God's providence, you'll have some peppers or carrots or cucumbers. Of course, the seed doesn't know that. The seed has no idea what it will become. Yet deep within the cucumber seed, or deep within the carrot seed, is everything the seed needs in order to become a cucumber or a carrot. It's all there.

With people, it's a little different. I will never grow up to be a cucumber or a carrot. And though I might be shaped like a watermelon, I will never actually become one.

That's because God did not make me to be a watermelon or a cucumber or a carrot. Nor did he make you to be one. No, he made us to be something completely different. He made us to be **SAINTS!**

From where we are today, we have very little idea what that means. Sometimes we use our imaginations, though. We stretch beyond the limitations of our experience and we try out what it's like to be a saint. We try to love with tenderness, we try to act justly, we try to walk humbly with God. We try these things out, and we even try to get good at them. And we're not just playing. We're not just pretending. We are preparing.

For just as a seed has no idea what it will be like to be an entire vine filled with tomatoes, we have no idea what things will be like when we become all that God has planned for us to become. One day, when we pass out of this life, into the next, we will know more what God has in mind for us, a future full of hope.

We do not know what ultimate purpose God has for us, but we trust in his goodness. For as the rain and the snow fall down from heaven and do not return without watering the earth, giving it life and growth, and making it yield, so does the Word of God go forth, and it does not return without accomplishing the purpose for which God sent it.

Brothers and sisters, as Christians, as members of Christ's body in the world, we are, in a way, an incarnation of God's word, sent forth into the world, to accomplish the purpose for which God sent us. And though we do not know what we will become, we will only become it through faithfulness. For as Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta told us, God does not require that we be successful. He only requires that we be faithful.

We are made to be saints. Saints in heaven. That is what we must become. And God provides for us everything we need in order to accomplish his purpose. He sent forth his word into the world, to water the earth, just as he sends the rain and the snow that come down from heaven.

So if your roots are not planted deep enough, or if there are birds that want to come down and snatch away what God has planted in your heart. Or if there are weeds in your life that are choking the very love of Jesus out of you, bring them to the altar of God. Let go of all that stuff that's keeping you from becoming who it is that God made you to be. Examine your life. Examine your heart.

Are you open to God's plan for you? Are you married couples open to the fullness of intimacy of love and life that God made marriage for? Are you kids open to being obedient to your parents so you can learn from them the way to love and be loved and so become a saint one day? Are you business owners and entrepreneurs open to God's plan for the use of resources for the sake of the good of everyone?

Anything in your life that's keeping you from becoming who it is God made you to be, let go of it, and lay it down on the altar, so that Jesus can take it up with him onto the cross. Let the sower who sowed the seeds help you tend to the garden of your life so that the harvest of your heart will yield 30, 60 or 100 fold.

And when we come forward for communion, to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, happy to be called to his heavenly supper, know that what we're doing is not just pretending. We're preparing to be the Saints God made us to be.

- Fr. Dennis Schenkel,  
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Original found at: <http://vitamea.cybercatholics.com/vitamea/2008/07/14/seeds-of-sainthood-homily-for-13-july-15th-sunday-cycle-a/#more-750>

### **Prayers of the Faithful**

For the Church, may she continue to proclaim Christ, the Divine Son of God, to all the nations; let us pray to the Lord.

For civil authorities, that they may encourage all citizens to fulfill their God-given mandate in the world; let us pray to the Lord.

For our parish, that it may be a home that fosters virtue in the lives of our members, and that this virtue may spread far beyond our walls; let us pray to the Lord.

For men and women in formation programs of seminarians and religious communities; that they may be strengthened and confirmed in their call to follow Christ unreservedly; let us pray to the Lord.

For families, that they may be houses of prayer and formation for the next generation; let us pray to the Lord.

For those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith, that they may be welcomed into God's heavenly kingdom; let us pray to the Lord.

## **Final Blessing**

Lord,  
Send your light upon your family.  
May they continue to enjoy your favor  
And devote themselves to doing good.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

## **Hymn Suggestions**

### **Hymns according to the Feast:**

All That We Have  
All You Who Are Thirsty  
Christ, The Sun of Light  
Here Am I  
Here I Am Lord

Joy to the World  
Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates  
Lord When You Came  
On Jordan's Bank  
Songs of Thankfulness and Praise  
When John Baptized by Jordan's River

### **Hymns Regarding Vocation**

Be Not Afraid  
Breathe on Me, O Breath of God  
Center of My Life  
Christian Do You Hear the Lord  
Come to the Water  
God Be in My Head  
God Is Working His Purpose Out  
God Whose Giving Knows No Ending  
Lord of All Nations Grant Me Grace  
Lord Whose Love in Humble Service  
Lord You Give the Great Commission  
Love Is His Word

Pan de Vida  
Praise to You, O Christ, Our Savior  
Sing of The Lord's Goodness  
Song over the Waters  
The Summons  
We Are Called  
We Are God's Work of Art/Somos la Creación  
de Dios  
You Are Mine  
You Have Anointed Me  
You Satisfy the Hungry Heart (Gift of Finest  
Wheat)

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