

Homily
Deacon Bob Corsaro
Baptism of the Lord
Year C

Is 42:1-4, 6-7
Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Anyone tired of the snow yet?

Who knows how to make a snow angel?

I have a retired friend who hates the cold and lives for warm weather....golfing, boating, and riding his Harley.

Recently feeling antsy and struck with cabin fever, he walked out into his snow laden back yard.... grumbling from lack of sunshine...he turns his back to the snow and jumps in.

Lying on his back' looking up to heaven he proceeds to make a snow angel.

(Boy, I would have paid good money to catch him in the act!)

He tells me, there he is waving his arms and legs, and as he looks up, the clouds in the sky begin to part and open up to this beautiful blue.

And there, high in the sky, a glistening white bird soars along just for him.

He began to realize God was telling him, relax, all of this snow is necessary. The saving waters of this snow will provide nourishment for the new life within the promise of spring.

I told him, “sounds to me ol’ buddy like you had an epiphany.”
He said, “I had a what?”

I said, “God was revealing himself to you in a very special way.”
He said “and he used blue sky and a sea gull?”

I said, “I’d like to think that bird was a dove.”

Today’s Gospel story, like last week’s, is another story of an epiphany. Today we have the showing forth of Christ at His baptism in the Jordan.

It’s been approximately 18yrs since we saw Jesus last, as a young boy in the temple.

We are fast forwarded from his returning home with Joseph and Mary where he would advance in wisdom age and favor before God and man....To where we are today, arriving in the Jordan, the waters of his baptism.

This puts Jesus at approx. 30 years old. This age matches up with the accepted age of entering active priesthood for the Jewish male in those times.

When we look at Jesus, we see his actions, his kindness, his compassion for others, his prayer life.....but if you were with him, looking at him, wouldn’t you be wondering, what is he thinking?

What makes him tic? How does he process his inner thoughts, what he receives from the Father?

And today, why is Jesus coming to be baptized?

Wasn't baptism all about the washing way of sin...surely Jesus was without sin...why would Jesus participate in this rite of cleansing for sinners?

Or was there something going on within Jesus that was much deeper. What was he thinking?

Was he discerning this call to ministry from the Father? Was he seeking, coming forward searching, to know God more?

Yearning for more? Searching for his own identity? His own purpose?

In Jesus' time all men and women were considered sons and daughters of God.

At Jesus' baptism, God speaks directly to him

.... "You are my **beloved** Son." Can you begin to imagine the **weight this experience** had on Jesus?

Now, Something **extraordinary** happens here for us also..

We witness, within Jesus' prayer God speaking directly to Jesus.

Heaven opens up and the Holy Spirit descends upon him in bodily form as a dove.

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

And Through the living word of the **Gospel** today, we witness the **unity Of the Holy Trinity**. Powerful isn't it!

We are invited by the Word into this loving relationship.

And through the waters of our own baptism we too are called physically and spiritually into this loving relationship by the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

God loves us so much...we are called to a new beginning, a rebirth in Christ.

And today as we begin to celebrate the new season of ordinary time Jesus begins his public ministry.

New beginnings...

Right after his baptism he was led by the Holy Spirit to the desert to be tempted. He carries the words the Father spoke to him, He feels the need to be alone, to pray and draw even closer to God.

To continue to bathe in the waters of his baptism... now in the desert?

And while in the desert, Its worth noting that in Luke and Matthew we see that Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. **When these days were over, afterwards**, when he was hungry, the tempter approached.

He was alone in prayer with God, fasting, drawing closer to God, praying and being fed and filled spiritually, and after 40 days at his weakest physically, the tempter approached.

Do you see the value of strength from spiritual nourishment here as it supports Jesus and can support us in our times of weakness and hunger?

Jesus sensed the importance of **being alone with the Father**. He showed us the importance of taking the time to do this.

To pay attention to our inner stirrings.

Jesus shows us the value that comes from **working at relationship** with God. and others in our lives.

Lord knows, it isn't always easy.

So, how do we arrive at our own personal desert, to come to know God, to love God deeper and love others deeper? To serve God and others **with love and justice?**

To find strength when we are at our weakest? Good questions as we draw near to the season of Lent.

Maybe like my struggling friend in the snow, find comfort in lying still, look to the heavens, see that blue sky and the white dove. Take the time draw closer to God for direction, maybe not make a snow angel, but **bathe in the waters of our own baptism.**

(To the baptismal font)

Father, God of mercy, through these waters of baptism you have filled us with new life as your very own children.

From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, you have formed one people, united in your Son Jesus Christ.

You have set us free and filled our hearts with the Spirit of your love, that we may live in your peace.

You call those who have been baptized to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ to people everywhere.

You have called your children, to this cleansing water and new birth that by sharing the faith of your Church we might have eternal life.

