

It was bedtime for six-year old Maria. Her dad was at the computer, finishing up a report due the next day.

After a few minutes, he realized Maria was standing next to him. "Honey, what do you need?", he asked.

"It's bedtime, Daddy. I came to say goodnight."

Still keeping one eye on the computer screen, he gave Maria a big hug and a kiss.

"Good night, sweet pea. Sleep tight. I love you. Now off to bed," Dad said, and returned to his report.

A few minutes later he looked up and there was Maria still standing there. "Honey, I gave you a hug and kiss. What do you want now?"

Little Maria said, "Yes, Daddy. You did give me a hug and kiss. But you really weren't in it. How about doing it again, and this time give me your full attention."

If we claim to be among Jesus' followers, then Jesus demands that we be "in it" with him – that we give him our full attention – not just our passing thoughts from time to time – as we keep ourselves focused on something else.

True Discipleship demands a constant awareness of God's presence in our lives – true discipleship compels us to seek the things of God in all things.

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus – the official close to the Christmas season. But as we celebrate Jesus' baptism – we remember our own Baptism – when three things happened to us after the life-giving waters of Baptism were poured over us:

We were anointed with the oil of Chrism – and reminded that just as Christ was anointed a priest, a prophet and a king – so, too, are we. . . which in part means we strive to make ourselves – and those around us – holy. We accept the call to announce the good news of the kingdom – by comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. And we are good stewards of all the material goods God entrusts us with --- things that demand more than just our passing attention.

We were clothed in a white garment – and asked to see in it – the outward sign of the change that took place within us – our dedication to Christ – and asked to keep our Christian dignity unstained – on our journey toward the kingdom of God ---- which demands a constant awareness of God's presence in our lives.

And we were also given a candle lit from the Easter Candle – symbolizing the light of Christ – and were challenged to always walk in the light of Christ, rather than the darkness of sin – something which compels us to seek the things of God in all things.

Last week we were told that the Magi were "overjoyed" at finding Jesus in Bethlehem. May we always be "overjoyed" at being called to follow Jesus as a priest, a prophet and king.

And, like the Magi, may we always "search diligently" for Christ in our lives – so that we can always walk in his wonderful light – rather than in the darkness of sin.

To do both of these things – will require that we be "in it" with Jesus – that we give him our full attention – not just our passing thoughts from time to time – as we keep ourselves focused on something else.

This is certainly a new year's resolution --- fit for us all.