

January 13, 2019 - Baptism of the Lord

*MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED  
NOW AND FOREVER!!!*

## SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

### Ten Reasons to Go to Mass

“When Mass is being celebrated, the sanctuary is filled with countless angels who adore the Divine Victim immolated on the altar.” – St. John Chrysostom. Some more reasons, why it is important to go to Mass each Sunday.

#### 3. Mass is Our Chance to Meet God’s Family

Sometimes, I think we make being a Catholic too complicated. How do we get to know God? A simple answer to that question is that we get to know God like we would get to know any other human being.

When a young man meets a woman and wants to get to know her better the first thing, he does is begin to talk to her and if we use this analogy with God, we call that prayer. The second thing he might do is do something with the woman and we call this Christian service because God is all about helping others (Mathew 11:3). Lastly if the relationship is serious the young man will spend time getting to know the woman’s family. God wants our relationship with Him to be serious so He invites us to His house every Sunday to gather with His family. The more we get to know God’s family the more we learn about God. For example, we can learn how God does not give up on someone when we see criminals at Mass. We learn how great God’s care is for us as we see parents with a child that has disabilities warmly welcome at Mass. We see God’s capacity to look past skin color by allowing people of all races and tongues to come together and worship Him. We can say if God loves this person, He can love me and/or God loves this person He must love everybody. By going to Mass, we learn a lot about God’s unconditional love. St. Augustine once said “The Church is a Hospital for Sinners not a hotel for saints.” I find great comfort that God loves me in my mess-up-ness.

#### 4. Mass is Our Chance to Relive Salvation History

The story of Moses leading the Israelites through the desert to the Promise Land is really a story about a group of ungrateful people with really bad memories that never learn to trust. The story begins with God doing the unimaginable. He soundly defeats the mighty Egyptian gods through the Ten Plagues and forces Pharaoh to free the Israelites from slavery. If this was not enough God saves the Israelites by opening up the Red Sea and allowing them to cross over on dry land. God then swallows up the Egyptian Army in the sea allowing the Israelites to escape. Israel had defeated their enemy, one of the best if not the best army in the world at that time, without lifting a sword because God was fighting on their side (Exodus).

Immediately though the Israelites lose their trust in God and build the

## THOUGHT OF THE DAY

### *Sunday*

There were three rites in the Old Testament, which were “baptisms” of sorts. First was a “baptism” of water. Moses brought Aaron and his son to the doors of the tabernacle and washed them with water. This was followed by a “baptism” of oil, when Moses poured oil upon Aaron’s head in order to sanctify him. The final “baptism” was one of blood. Moses took the blood of the ram of consecration and put it upon Aaron’s right ear and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot. This ritual implied a gradual consecration. These baptisms would have their counterparts in the Jordan, the Transfiguration, and Calvary. – Fulton Sheen

### *Monday*

If someone offered you a \$1,000 to quit following Jesus would you take the money?

### *Tuesday*

Maybe one of the reasons why Jesus did not want the demons to speak

Golden calf to be their security blanket. In addition, they refuse to trust in God's power to lead them into the Promise Land right away. Therefore, God makes them wander through the desert for Forty years. Despite all that God has done for them they quickly start to grumble against God for a lack of food and water. Again, with great power God comes to their aid and provides for them manna (bread from heaven), quail, and water from the rock to sustain them. All of these miracles should show them that God is with them and will protect them but they keep sinning over and over again. If only they would remember God's goodness toward them (Exodus, Numbers, & Leviticus).

At Mass we get a chance to have a refresher course in all that our God has done for us so that our faith in Him may grow. For example, as we enter the Church we normally pass by the Baptismal font or a dish with holy water in it. It is customary for one to dip one's hand into the water and make the Sign of the Cross. While doing this a person should imagine oneself crossing through the Red Sea on dry land and the Old Testament Story of Joshua leading the Israelites into the Promise Land by stopping the mighty Jordan River in a similar way to Moses and the Red Sea. These of course are meant to remind us of our Baptism in which we are free from slavery to sin and are allowed into God's promise land of love.

The main way in which we relive Salvation History is of course the Eucharist where we are reminded of all that Jesus did to save us from unending death by enduring the cross and being raised from the dead. The more we realize what God had done for us and the more we remember how faithful God is, we will live with less fear and more love. The Mass therefore is one of the great places to go in order to remind ourselves of all that God has done for us.

#### 5. Mass Helps Us Know What True Love is

I had a very rough relationship with my father growing up and he was not there to teach me some of the things that a father should teach his son. When I entered Boy Scouts as a young boy, I was blest that a few of the male leaders were willing to take me aside and teach me these things that my father did not teach me. In a similar way the world should teach us what true love is and it tries. Sadly it fails because it does not know what love is. At the Mass God helps us know what true love is and He lays down his life for us. God also forgives us for nailing His Son to the Cross with our sins. God forgives us for hurting our siblings etc. At the Mass we learn what true love is because Jesus is the ultimate model of what love is. We as human beings should be ready therefore to model the love we see in Christ again for others we encounter outside the Mass.

was that He did not want anything evil speaking on His behalf.

#### *Wednesday*

"Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts,...Your affectionate uncle, Screwtape." — C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

#### *Thursday*

Interesting Jesus and the leper changes place. The Leper had been the one who could not enter the town at the beginning and at the end of the story, it was Jesus who could not enter the towns openly.

#### *Friday*

A relationship without trust is like a car without gas, you can stay in it all you want, but it won't go anywhere

#### *Saturday*

"Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are." — Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*



## BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

### January 13 2019 The Baptism of the Lord Lectionary: 21 Gospel LK 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

#### Spiritual Reflections:

In her book: *A Contemplative Reading of the Gospel Mathew: The Journey Toward Hope*, Scripture Scholar Elena

Bosetti writes the following: *John was not a pompous, arrogant preacher who spoke from on high to those beneath him and of whom it was not permitted to ask questions. Luke makes us see that the people questioned him. And the austere prophet of the desert had ears for everyone: for the crowd, but more particularly for the publicans—kept at a distance by the spiritual leaders of Judaism—and even for soldiers.*

### Spiritual Questions:

1. How do you think John the Baptist was able to remain humble despite the fact that his birth was announced by an angel and people expected great things from him?
2. Why did the Jewish religion at the time of John the Baptist feel that it was important to exclude people?
3. Why do people exclude people today?
4. Who are the people that we need to reach out today?
5. How do you tell people about Jesus? Would people say your style is similar to John the Baptist?



### A HEALING PRAYER.

O Jesus, Good Shepherd, You heal the sick and assist the needy. I lift up to you those who are suffering from the sin of abortion. You know what it is like to endure pain. Look kindly on those who have had or have assisted in the sin of abortion today and heal them. Restore them to strength of soul and body.

Give Your gift of wisdom to physicians who have performed abortions or desire to do so May they be guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do and thus repent from their evil ways. Bless the nurses who work in the abortion industry so that their hands will become instruments of peace and caring like they were intended to and not instruments of death. Please touch all who work within the abortion industry in a way that allows them to turn away from the culture of death and that allows them to begin to embrace the culture of life.

Bless, the efforts of everyone who strive to promote the dignity of human life. O Jesus, grant our world Your healing grace of love and peace. Amen.



*Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.*

### A SPIRIT TO KNOW YOU

Gracious and Holy Father, please give those who do not know you intellect to understand you, reason to discern you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you, a spirit to know you, a heart to meditate upon you, ears to hear you, eyes to see you, a tongue to proclaim you, a way of life pleasing to you, patience to wait for you and perseverance to look for you. Grant all those who are searching for you a perfect end, in your holy presence, a blessed resurrection and life everlasting.



## This Week's Trivia

Match the Biblical Character with the Symbol(s) that represent him.

1. Adam 2. Abel 3. Noah 4. Abraham
- A. \_\_\_ Altar/Stars  
B. \_\_\_ Shepherd Staff/Lamb  
C. \_\_\_ Pickaxe/Apple  
D. \_\_\_ ark/dove/olive branch

## Last Week's Answer

1. What is "Adam's Ale"? - Water
2. What great battle is supposed to take place near the mountain area of Megiddo? – Armageddon
3. What book in the Bible do we get the term "The Writing on the Wall?" – Book of Daniel
4. Who used Jacob's ladder in the Book of Genesis? -Angels



# DUC IN ALTUM:

## CATHOLIC PRAYER:

### PRAYER TO MARY, MOTHER OF GOD -FOR THE FAMILY

Mary, Mother of God, at your request, Jesus worked His first miracle. He changed water into wine for the wedding guests at Cana in Galilee.

Over the centuries you have not ceased to obtain countless signs and wonders for the poor, exiled children of Eve.

We therefore ask you to intercede with your Divine Son for the miraculous graces which the modern world so desperately needs:

- For the conversion and reconversion of whole nations to Jesus Christ and His teaching on marriage and the family.
- For the heroic preservation among Christians of their faith in the indissolubility of marriage, marital fidelity and the loving acceptance of children, as the bedrock of the Christian family.
- For the courage of martyrs in all of us followers of Christ, that we may witness to His power to overcome the powers of darkness that are bent on destroying the human family and the moral law.

Mary, Mother of the Holy Family, and Mother of our families, pray for us. Amen.



## Humor



THE BABY JESUS STARTS TEETHING.

