

Resources from Randy

Updates in Adult and Family Ministry

In this issue:

- Reflections on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
- Suggestions for Household/Parish Activities

This year the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated on Monday, January 9 and so it may be in danger of being forgotten or overshadowed by the Epiphany which will be celebrated on January 8. This pivotal feast closes our liturgical celebration of the Christmas Season and begins the season of winter Ordinary Time. Why not pause and note this feast in a special way?

Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan is a ritual celebration of empowerment. Jesus is anointed for public ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit. The voice of his Father is heard as the Spirit descends upon the Son of God. Jesus' mission to bring the good news of salvation to the poor is dramatically clarified for all to see. We too are baptized by water and the Spirit into the fullness of our lives as children of God. Most of us were baptized as infants, and so we spend a lifetime growing into our "baptismal potential".

This feast is a great day for households to remember the baptism of their members. One idea would be to set up a prayer center on the dining room table or a table in the living room or family room. On a white cloth arrange all of your "baptism treasures:" candles, white garments, certificates, photos, etc. that you are able to gather. Light the candles, read the gospel (Mark 1: 7-11), then pray this prayer together as a family: *God, Divine Parent, we are your children. Like Jesus, you chose us to spread your good news to the world. Through water and the Spirit, we have been cleansed of sin, and reborn into Christ. Help us to live out our baptismal call more fully and deeply each day. Amen.* When you finish your prayer, tell baptismal stories; look at photos, and videos. Perhaps share a special baptismal cake decorated with a dove and flowing water.

A wonderful parish project for this feast is to give out film canisters filled with holy water. (Remember film canisters? Folks still have them sitting in their dresser drawers, just waiting for some good use.) Christian formation and /or school students can use "squeezy paints" to decorate the canisters ahead with doves and flowing water. (Hint: an easy way to fill the canisters is with small creamers that have a pointed spout. Have Father do the blessing of the water once they are all filled.) Families can volunteer to stand at the church exits and hand out the canisters, one per household, after Sunday liturgy, saying to folks, "Remember your baptism." These small containers can also be taken to the homebound, and on hospital and prison visits. Putting a plea for the film canisters in the bulletin for a couple of weeks will bring you an abundance of these great containers.

Our liturgical calendar is overflowing with feasts! We Christians are always celebrating new life. Be sure to pause this year to celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord!