



## From the Pastor's Desk:

Our Advent 2009 Parish Mission called us to recognize God in the world around us telling us, taking off our shoes to recognize we are standing on "Holy Ground". We were brought to recognize God "...in the Loving Embrace of Forgiveness", "...in our heart as we dig deep into our soul to find or renew his presence and then the ultimate recognition of God, in Christ, "...in the breaking of the bread", the Eucharist we celebrate with Holy Mass. We were reminded that recognizing God includes learning to laugh, sometimes at ourselves, certainly with others and always as a way to keep life in perspective. We heard of a priest forgiving himself and his father, a son embracing his father whom he rarely new, but whose presence he never lost. We walked into His presence with a renewed understanding of how blessed we are to have Christ, completely present to us, in Sacred Body and Blood we receive during the celebration of Mass.

Our first Advent Musical, "Like Winter Waiting," brought 500 parishioners out on a cold snow stormy evening to recall the ancient prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, its fulfillment in the birth of Jesus through the faith of Mary and Joseph, and, the faith of Elizabeth and John who brought the birth of John who would be known as "the Baptist". With joy his coming as the Savior of peoples of All Nations we proclaimed by the visit of the Three Kings from the Orient, bearing gifts.

Christmas brought us beautiful Liturgies wrapped in Pageants and glorious music as we sang the hymns that proclaimed and reflected... "O come all ye faithful joyful and triumphant... to Bethlehem" "Hark the Herald Angels Sing... glory to the newborn King."

The New Year brought reflection on our families as a reflection of "The Holy Family" and again the celebration of the arrival of the Three Kings, Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior who open our hearts to follow the star of our hopes and dreams with confidence and assurance that the Child of Bethlehem is, the Christ, the anointed one, who came to assure us of God's presence and His intimate love of each of us.

And now, today, we celebrate the conclusion of this Holy Season of Christmas, with the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by John. The journey began with a call to recognize God revealed in Christ, and, it concludes this liturgical chapter with Christ calling us to Baptism, the call to enter the Holy Ground of His presence in our life renouncing sin and dedicating our life to following His guidance and the Commands of our heavenly Father. It is here at the Jordan River that our Baptism takes its purpose. With Christ, we are baptized into His Life, Death and Resurrection. In baptism all life has new meaning as our humanity is washed clean of sin and given a new beginning through water and the Holy Spirit. In fact, at our baptism we hear God the Father say about us, "This is my beloved son/daughter...."

You and I are wrapped in swaddling clothes of His birth, given hope and light in the Sacrament of Baptism, nourished by His presence in Holy Communion, picked up and brushed off in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and empowered to do great things through the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.

What more could we ask for that we do not have right here in His Church. "Come, let us adore Him." We are standing on Holy Ground.

May God + bless you and yours now and forever,

*Father Anthony*

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