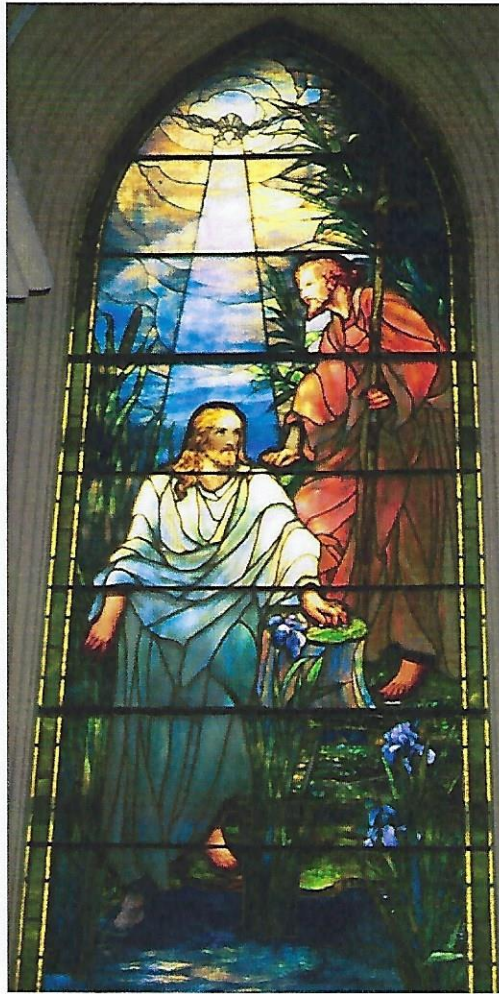


January 13, 2019

The Baptism of the Lord



Readings for the week of January 13, 2019

Sunday: Is 40:1-5, 9-11/Ps 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30 [1]/Ti
2:11-14; 3:4-7/Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

Monday: Heb 1:1-6/Ps 97:1 and 2b, 6 and 7c, 9 [cf. 7c]/Mk 1:14-
20

Tuesday: Heb 2:5-12/Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9 [cf. 7]/Mk 1:21-28

Wednesday: Heb 2:14-18/Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9 [8a]/Mk 1:29-39

Thursday: Heb 3:7-14/Ps 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11 [8]/Mk 1:40-45

Friday: Heb 4:1-5, 11/Ps 78:3 and 4bc, 6c-7, 8 [cf. 7b]/Mk 2:1-12

Saturday: Heb 4:12-16/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15 [cf. Jn 6:63c]/Mk 2:13-17

Next Sunday: Is 62:1-5/Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10 [3]/1 Cor 12:4-11/Jn
2:1-11

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

A Plunge into Mission

The Baptism of the Lord - Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Baptism is our initial plunge into mission. It is our inaugural undertaking of Christ's mission to the world. We don't think of this so much as we baptize a sweet baby dressed in a white garment and maybe sucking on a pacifier in her father's arms. It is, however, the reality of our Christian lives to live the mission of Christ in the world. But what does that mean?

In the gospel today, John is proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. **"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."**

John's words indicate that this new baptism, this mission, is something completely different. It will call all of us to a new life which is directed by the passion and fire of the Holy Spirit. Once baptized, there is no turning back.

In baptism, we become a new creation in Christ. We are God's beloved. We are the ones in whom God takes delight and pleasure. However, this status, this Christian dignity, comes with the cost of the cross. We are forever called into the fire and passion of sacrificial living. We no longer live for self but for others. We will experience the greatest of joys and the deepest of sorrows in this life but ultimately, we believe that this is what our baptism calls us to; to a life that is not free of suffering but filled with the faith that comes from Jesus Christ.

The meaning of our baptism is manifest in the coming weeks of scripture as we journey through this liturgical year and the life of Jesus. Jesus will heal, comfort, forgive and raise the dead. He will perform miracles and provide teachings that transform lives. He will minister to the poor and the marginalized. He will call upon poor men and women to carry his message of mercy, hope and love into the world. He calls us as well. Jesus will provide for us the recipe for being one of his disciples, preparing us for our work here on earth and our eternal life in heaven.

As Christians, our baptism calls us to serve the needs of all, especially those in most need. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are concrete ways that we can live out our baptism, living as a disciple of Christ. We are called to take the initial plunge of our baptism into the self-sacrificing life that is Jesus Christ.

Happy New Year!


Sue Schettler