

Church of the Divine Love
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD
JANUARY 9, 2022
10:15 AM

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Please observe silence after the candles are lit

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn **#76 – On Jordan’s bank vs. 1-3&5**

Opening Acclamation page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (sung) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Isaiah 43:1-7**

Psalm 29

Second Lesson: **Acts 8:14-17**

Gradual Hymn **#294 – Baptized in water**

Gospel: **Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

General Thanksgivings pages 836, 837

Confession of Sin page 360

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn **#139 – When Jesus went to Jordan’s stream**

Doxology (sung)

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer B	page 367
Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal)	page 362
The Lord's Prayer	page 364
The Breaking of the Bread, Anthem & Prayer	page 337
The Communion of the People	
Communion Hymn – #120 – The sinless one to Jordan came	
Post Communion Prayer	page 365
Prayer for Peace – on insert	
Prayer of St. Francis	page 833

Sermon Sunday January 9, 2022

Isaiah 43: 1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8: 14-17; Luke 3: 15-17,21-22.

May the word of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to your sight, o Lord, my rock, my redeemer. Amen.

“And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’”

Those words are, for me, the highpoint, the climax, the beauty of today's gospel. They are God's claim on and call to Jesus, what we might call God's insistence. I think they are words each of us longs to hear and believe about ourselves. So, I want you to try this. Repeat after me. I am God's son/daughter. I am the Beloved of God. With me God is well pleased.

What was that like? Was it easy, difficult, awkward? Do you believe that about yourself? Each other? What feelings or thoughts did those words evoke in you? Were there any ifs, ands, or buts that accompanied the words as you said them? If you didn't or couldn't say those words, why not? What reasons or excuses did you give for why those words could not be God's insistence for you?

At some level most of us probably struggle to understand and accept the pure gift of God's insistence for us. John the Baptist didn't understand the gift. “I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal,” John says. Implicit in that is his assumption that Jesus is somehow worthy of having the thong of his sandal untied by someone else. Why do we always want to make this about worthiness, about being deserving, about earning what we get? That's just not an issue for God in today's gospel. There are no conditions or prerequisites to the words God speaks. The words spoken by the heavenly voice in today's gospel are as much God's claim and call on us as on Jesus. They are an expansion of the Christmas Eve yes. Do you remember what I said that night? I told you that the child we receive and celebrate on Christmas Eve is the sign of God's yes to you and me, that Jesus is the embodiment of God's yes to us and the world.

Regardless of who you are, where you are from, what you have done or left undone, or what is happening in your life today, you get a yes. There is no one who does not get a yes.

The thing that strikes me most about these words from the heavenly voice is that up to this point Jesus hasn't done anything. He hasn't preached or taught. He hasn't healed anyone. He hasn't walked on water, turned water into wine, or fed 5000 with a few fish and loaves of bread. He hasn't raised anyone from the dead. He hasn't died on the cross, been resurrected, or ascended to heaven. He hasn't performed or proved himself worthy or deserving. He doesn't even say, Thank you. I will work hard to be a good son. I will prove myself to be worthy of what you have said. He simply receives the gift. He lets the words wash over and drench him. The question is never, do I get a yes? Am I the son or daughter of God, the Beloved, with whom God is well pleased? That's a given, the gift of God. It's the insistence of God in each of our lives. The only question is whether we can discern that gift in the conditions and circumstances of our lives.

And that's not easy. It means we step into or, as I said last week, give existence to God's insistence through our words, our actions, our lives, even when we do not know where it will take us or how it will turn out. God's insistence is not a fairy tale or a story of ease and comfort in which we all live happily ever after. God's insistence is risky. It might come to fruition, but it might not. There are no guarantees. And we don't always get it right. Sometimes we confuse our own insistence for God's. Most times we sense God's insistence in us but cannot see from where it comes, what it is exactly, or where it is going. It's like the wind. It "blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (John 3:8). We sense the insistence of love, say yes to each other, get married, but have no idea what our lives and marriage will look like in one, five, or fifty years. That's equally true for our parenting, a career, or moving to a new town. Or maybe a friend says something that just won't let us go. We know there is something in her or his words calling us forward, but we are not clear what it is. It can take time to bring the insistence to existence. Life doesn't work out the way we planned. Some people never planned for or expected their first marriage to end in divorce. But even then, the insistence remains, "You are my son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased. "To listen for and follow the insistence, come what may, is to let our lives be transformed. That's the story of the gospel. That's the life Jesus lived.

After Jesus is baptized, he goes to the wilderness and comes out saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. I have been anointed to bring good news to the poor...." Look at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and the struggle between his insistence and God's insistence. Listen to the cry of Jesus on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Remember how his life was changed and enlarged by the insistence of the Syro-Phoenician woman that Jesus heal her daughter, a child Jesus originally described as a dog not worthy to eat the children's bread? Jesus struggled with God's insistence just like we do. God's insistence is not a single moment in time or a once and for all decision, for God or us. It is a way of being, a path to be followed, and we have to play it out to the end even when we have no idea where it is going or what will happen. We are always discerning God's insistence in our lives, to hear God's call and claim on us. We are always listening for the yes to which we can answer yes. Yes, yes. That's the moment of epiphany.

Some days we wake up excited about and looking forward to the new day. Other days we wake up and know from the start it will be a bad or difficult day. The insistence is in both. Sometimes we make the right decision and other times we make the wrong decision. The insistence is in both. Some days we

know exactly what to do and other days we have no idea which end is up. The insistence is in both. Some days we are clear about our life and the direction we want to go. Other days we are not so clear. We wander and wonder; not really sure about anything. The insistence is in both. It's not as if God insists in one situation but not in another. God is always insisting, saying yes, declaring us to be beloved children with whom God is well pleased. This is happening in each of our lives today, right now.

It was that insisting question that took the people to the river in today's gospel. They were questioning in their hearts. They were hearing and discerning the insistence of God. What is your heart's question? What is the question tugging and pulling at you, the question that has hold of you and won't let go? What is the question that causes you to hope against hope and pray for the impossible? Somewhere in that question is the insistence of God.

Again and again, I find that God's insistence is more in the questions than the answers we might come up with. So, whatever the insisting question, the heart question, is for you today, please don't answer that question. Follow it. Just say yes and see where it takes you. **Amen.**

Masks are required during the service.

SUNDAY – 1 EPIPHANY/THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

MONDAY 8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY THRIFT SHOP CLOSED

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY THRIFT SHOP CLOSED

SUNDAY – 2 EPIPHANY

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II (also on zoom)

11:15 AM VESTRY MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30TH – PARISH ANNUAL MEETING

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE – DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Give to all who suffer the refreshing waters of your compassion and healing. Make them dwell in the safety of your care even in the midst of all that troubles them. Especially we remember before you:

Girard Bishop	Chrissy Neville	Bob Curley
Nathan Treadwell	John Loubengeiger	Dorothy
Chris Dickson	Kate Jones	Tricia Oretle
Michael Echevarria	John Rocco	Robert Sweat
Martinisi Family	Michael & Family	Warren
Charlotte H.	Bernie Walther	Sylvia
Mo (Rachael)	Bill Conklin Sr.	Laura
Anthony Paribello	Barbara Curran	Taylor
Ciara	Gabriel	Aidan
Elodie	Del	Julia
People of Haiti	Parkhurst Family	Tim
Theresa K.	Amy E.	Jason
Christopher & Family	Victims of Natural Disasters	

Help us to speak words of encouragement and offer deeds of kindness to them. Bring us with them, into the unending joy of your kingdom. Amen

Prayer for the New Year:

O God our Creator, you have divided our life into days and seasons, and called us to acknowledge your providence year after year. Accept our praise and thanksgiving for this past year and hear our prayers for the new year. Plant in every heart, we pray, the love of him who is the Savior of the world, Jesus. Grant that we who begin this year in his Name, may complete it to his honor and glory. Pardon our transgressions of the past and guide us by your Holy Spirit that we may turn our feet into your paths, serve you in peace, and live in your presence. All this we ask in the holy name of your Son, Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, in glory everlasting. Amen.