

Baptism of the Lord – C – 2019  
Isaiah 40.1-5,9-11///Titus 2.11-14,3.4-7///Luke 3.15-16,21.22

→it's good to be back home after spending the last ten days both in Los Angeles and Las Vegas.....

→and I started the New Year this year by doing something that has been on my bucket list for as long as I can remember and that was to go to the Rose Parade in Pasadena....and along with attending that spectacular event....and doing all kinds of unique things like standing on the 50 yard line of the Rose Bowl field....to visiting the set of Judge Judy...to seeing Celine Dion in Las Vegas....I can only describe and sum up my trip in one word – “Unforgettable”

→and.....I bring this up today on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord...because I would imagine....[as we hear in today's Gospel reading] on that day near the banks of the Jordan River, as the people had gathered around John the Baptist wondering if he might be the Messiah.....along comes Jesus...who gets baptized just like everyone else....

→however.... upon coming out of the water something special happens

→...the heavens open...and....the Holy Spirit descended and a voice was heard from above ..... ***“you are my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased.”***

→it had to have been an “unforgettable” moment

PAUSE

→today we celebrate the last feast of our Christmas season...the Baptism of the Lord.....and in doing so bring it to a close.

→for many of us [however]...the Christmas has been over for some time now...in stores...it ended on December 26 when the Christmas items were replaced by

Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day....and later today...here in Church we too will drag out all of the boxes and crates to put everything away for another year...

→but until then...we celebrate this “unforgettable” moment in the life of Christ and we remember the same “unforgettable” moment that happened in our lives when we too were baptized...

PAUSE

---yet at the same time

→...I have often wondered why Jesus waited for 30 year for this “unforgettable moment”...his baptism...the beginning of his mission as the savior and Messiah to happen

PAUSE

→it is kind of ironic when you think about it..... that Jesus waited until he was 30 to receive his baptism.....while today we wait just a few weeks before we baptize newborns.... [and so I've wondered]

→why didn't Jesus meet up with John and get baptized earlier?

→why didn't he start his mission when he was younger?

→....what was he waiting for!

→well I believe a possible answer is that.....

→....maybe.....the people weren't ready for Jesus just yet...

→as we hear from the first reading from the prophet Isaiah.... “a voice had to cry out in the desert... preparing the way of the Lord...making straight the pathways....filling in the valleys...and making smooth the mountains....

--and in our second reading.....St. Paul in his letter to Titus...echoes this thought when he writes: ... “the kindness and love of God appeared...not because of what we had done...but because of God’s love and mercy....

→[and so]....maybe the time wasn’t right just yet and the people wouldn’t have understood Jesus

→....they had to receive **FIRST** the message of John the Baptist...before they could receive Jesus Christ.

→i.o.w.....Jesus had to wait until the people were aware of their sins and more importantly aware of their need for God in their lives before he could begin his mission of bringing the gospel to those around him

→and I believe sometimes.....the same holds true for you and me today as well

→...until we become fully aware of our need for God **in our** lives

→...until we become fully aware of and give to God the priority he deserves

→...until we become fully aware of God’s presence among us

→the gospel message...its meaning, its power, its effect...will continue to fall on deaf ears and be unheard.

→[you see] Christ can’t begin to act in our lives and transform us until ---like the people of long ago--- until we realize that we are part of this “unforgettable moment”

→that through our baptism **we share** in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ

→and the only way to make ourselves ready is to recognize and admit our need for Christ in our lives

→to recognize and give Christ the priority that he deserves

→to acknowledge and accept Jesus Christ as someone we need to help us along this journey of life....

...and that is difficult to do these days especially with all the temptations we face, all of busyness and activities that fill up our minds and our days.

→however, our challenge, our struggle...and our task is to see and to realize....that in spite of all that influences us

...Jesus Christ...our faith...our spirituality....needs to be given its proper place in our lives

→...when that happens....then and only then will Jesus begin to act in and through us...then and only then will we be changed into what God made us to be....then and only then will our world become the place God intended it to be

PAUSE

→the people of Israel had to wait 30 years to hear the preaching and message of Jesus Christ

→for some...that wait continues even today

→for you and me.....because of our baptism...our unforgettable moment...hopefully we can realize that the presence of Christ is right here before us...the message and wisdom of the Gospel is right at our fingertips...and the power to bring it to life is within our reach as the people of God.....

PAUSE

→Jesus was baptized in order to open our hearts and minds to God's love that is freely and generously given to each one of us

→we have been baptized.....and we will continue to baptize the new lives that are given to us...to show and to remind us that God's love is part of who we are.

---it truly is an "unforgettable moment" .....when we become his children in whom he is well-pleased.