

## SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 15, 2023

Isaiah 49:3, 5–6 • 1 Corinthians 1:1–3 • John 1:29–34

### I.

I was visiting my parents this week,  
so I didn't get the chance to take down my Christmas tree before I left.

That's on my list of things to do on Monday.

It's a reminder that the Christmas season only ended last week.

Here in the church,  
the crèche and poinsettias,  
which are in the St. Vincent de Paul chapel,  
will remain in place until February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

That's the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

On this 40<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas,  
the Church commemorates the presentation of the Christ child  
in the Jerusalem Temple.

### II.

The lingering presence of the crèche is a kind of Christmas echo.

There's something similar in today's Gospel.

At the start of Ordinary Time,  
a passage from the beginning of the Gospel of John is always read.

These passages are tied to the epiphany dimension of the Christmas season,  
which commemorates the manifestation or revelation of Christ as the Savior of all.

Traditionally, there are epiphanies:

the visit of the magi,  
 the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan,  
 and the changing of water into wine at the wedding feast of Cana.

In today's Gospel,  
 John the Baptist recounts Jesus' baptism:

“I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven  
 and remain upon him.  
 I did not know him,  
 but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me,  
 ‘On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain,  
 he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’”

Jesus' baptism is an epiphany or revelation  
 because there he is identified as Son of God and Savior.

John's testimony is also a kind of epiphany  
 because it serves to make Christ known:

“John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said,  
 ‘Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’”

By the way,  
 that scene is depicted in the panel above the Cathedral's original baptistery.

It shows John baptizing Jesus.

The Latin inscription underneath is the phrase from today's Gospel:  
*Ecce Agnus Dei* (Behold, the Lamb of God).

Today's Gospel is about knowledge:

John's coming to know Christ,  
 and then making him known to others:

“I did not know him,  
 but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might  
 be made known to Israel.”

In a way,  
John the Baptist is speaking for us.

He's describing the two great movements of the Christian life:  
discipleship and mission—  
knowing Christ and making him known.

Both discipleship and mission are rooted in Baptism.

The name of this first sacrament we receive means “immersion.”

Baptism is a literal immersion into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That action of Christ washes away our sins  
and draws us into Jesus' life with God—  
the Holy Trinity.

The rest of life is meant to be a witness to Christ's death and resurrection.

In other words,  
our lives are capable of showing forth the love that God has for each person.

The way we treat one another,  
and the way we go about life,  
is also meant to be a compelling explanation of our need for God.

This is a beautiful way to live!

### **III.**

Early in this new year,  
I'd like to offer an encouragement:

Take a concrete step to know Christ better,  
so that you can, in turn, make him known.

In particular,  
I'd like to encourage you to attend the parish's monthly holy hour.

On the third Tuesday of the month,  
from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.,  
we gather in front of the holy sacrament of the Eucharist.

For parents with young children:  
perhaps you could take turns coming, month to month.

For those who do not like to drive at night:  
perhaps you could hitch a ride with a fellow parishioner.

The holy hour includes the beautiful chanting of the Psalms,  
readings from sacred Scripture and the saints,  
and silence so that we can commune with God.

By making the monthly holy hour a regular part of our lives,  
we will come to know Christ better,  
and we will more easily make him known to others.

As we go about the rest of our days and weeks,  
we will be able to repeat the words of John the Baptist:

“Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God.”