



The Baptism of the Lord January 10, 2021

All you who are
thirsty, come
to the water!

— Isaiah 55:1

THE WATERS OF BAPTISM

When new sod is put in, it needs constant saturation with water. Landscapers say that this “knits” the sod to the soil. The same when a branch is grafted onto a tree: the poultice that joins them at the splice must be kept wet at all times. Water is the stuff that binds the very cells of our bodies together. No wonder religions throughout all times and cultures have used it so prominently. When Jesus stepped into the Jordan for baptism, he “knit” himself to what had come before him. By going to the Jordan, he made himself one with the people of Israel who had crossed it into their Promised Land. With John the Baptist, Christ wove himself into the prophetic tradition that heralded the coming reign of God. He had become fully human in the waters of Mary’s womb, and by partaking in the rite of the baptism of repentance, Jesus identified himself with our sinful, frail humanity. It is through the waters of baptism that Christ continues to graft new members onto his Body, the Church; through these waters we are cleansed from sin and filled with the promise of grace, given our destiny for eternal life. For us, as for Jesus, it is also the waters of baptism that inaugurate our mission to proclaim the Good News.

—J. S. Paluch Co.

FEAST OF FAITH

The Sign of the Cross

At the beginning of our prayer, we make the sign of the cross together. This sign, simple and powerful, operates on many levels. We trace the sign of the cross over our bodies, reminding ourselves that the cross of Christ has become our source of resurrection, life, and grace. With this sign, we also profess our faith in the Trinity: the presider does not say “in the *names*,” but “in the *name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”—three persons, one God. The sign of the cross is also a baptismal reminder, for every sign of the cross echoes the words spoken over us at our baptism, which marked our entry into the saving mystery of Christ. This many-layered sign is also our primary sign of blessing: the cross is traced over people, places, and things upon which we ask God to impart divine benediction.

In blessing ourselves with the sign of the cross at the beginning of Mass, we acknowledge the mystery that has gathered us together: that Christ, the crucified and risen One, is living, and that we are members of his Body. Our response, our Amen, is our yes to all this, our first profession of faith.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon: Heb 1:1-6; Ps 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9; Mk 1:14-20
Tues: Heb 2:5-12; Ps 8:2ab, 5, 6-9; Mk 1:21-28
Wed: Heb 2:14-18; Ps 105:1-4, 6-9; Mk 1:29-39
Thurs: Heb 3:7-14; Ps 95:6-11; Mk 1:40-45
Fri: Heb 4:1-5, 11; Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8; Mk 2:1-12
Sat: Heb 4:12-16; Ps 19:8-10, 15; Mk 2:13-17
Sun: 1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19; Ps 40:2, 4, 7-10; 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20; Jn 1:35-42

AN ANCIENT BAPTISTERY: One of the most ancient and enduring sites for baptism in Rome is the church of San Giovanni in Fonte. This church is in fact a baptistery, and houses the font for the Lateran Basilica, the cathedral of Rome. The Emperor Constantine sponsored its construction in the year 315, and it is therefore the oldest baptistery in the world. It is the model for nearly all later baptisteries, including perhaps the font in your own parish church.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!

For the month of **January** offerings:

PLEASE mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. Include your offering envelope # with your donation.

1/10: *Capital Expenditures.* 1/17: *No 2nd collection.* 1/24: *Ch in Latin America.*

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA Zoom

Finance Council [FC]: TBA Zoom

Liturgy Committee: TBA Zoom

St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044

St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

Centering Prayer ZOOM: Tues. noon/Fri. 930am - info www.stphilipstteresa.org

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

1/10 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

1/10 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Brendan Smith

1/17 Sun. 8am Mass Mary Karp

1/17 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Shirley Strong

Prayer Requests: Leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Mary K., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorri K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Jacque W., Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James, Dennis M., Art H., Lynn, Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N.

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: The Baptism of the Lord
Monday: First Week in Ordinary Time begins
Wednesday: St. Hilary
Saturday: Blessed Virgin Mary

The Pastor Speaks.....

1. The **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** begins Monday, 18 January (USA). Specific intentions may be inserted in the general intercessions at Mass and the Hours.

2. As per the direction given by Bishop Robert Vasa to all the Pastors during our recent deanery zoom meetings, I decided to provide two more opportunities to those of our parishioners who like to receive



Holy Communion. Other than Sundays and some Holy Days of Obligation, those who would like to receive Holy Communion from me or another delegated by me may do so until otherwise notified on **Wednesdays at St Philip’s and Thursdays at St Teresa’s at 9:15 AM.**

(All are kindly to note down that the Distribution of Holy Communion will be done soon after the celebration of Eucharist privately by me or another priest delegated. This way the bishop wants us to understand that distribution of Holy Communion not as independent Communion Service but as it were an act flowing over from the Eucharistic Celebration.)

OUTDOOR SUNDAY MASSES:

Times & Zoom information can be found at
our parish website ---- www.stphilipstteresa.org

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for December 2020

We prepared for potentially cold and stormy skies for the December Rural Food distribution by purchasing drive through tents to shelter our volunteers and the precious commodities they prepared to distribute. We



were happy to see sunny skies and warm weather on Tuesday, 12/8, as we distributed food to 60 families totaling 139 people, including 24 seniors and 34 children. We received warm smiles and much appreciation as we also distributed socks, masks, scarves, hats and [Union Hotel handmade cookies](#) for all families who received nutritional support at the distribution.

We are so thankful for the support provided to make this program flourish. A new volunteer told us, "We were so happy to be there and it really touched our hearts to see all the love present."

This program is funded through the Rural Food Collection each month, private donations and awesome volunteers. Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.



RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in Hall

Sat., January 9, 9-10:00am: repackaging

Mon., January 11, 8-11:00am: set up

Tues., January 12, 8-11:00am: food distribution



One Body: Rooted in love, drawing life from the same source

looking ahead to The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

by [Catherine E. Clifford](#)

Each year different Christian communities from around the world are invited to prepare resources for our common celebration of the [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#) at the invitation of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. This year, the task fell to an ecumenical monastic community, the [Sisters of Grandchamp](#), which brings together women from diverse churches and cultures in French-speaking Switzerland. The theme they have chosen – inspired by chapter 15 of John's Gospel – is born from a lived experience of unity in faith and prayer, and of the oneness at the heart of the monastic journey: "[Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit.](#)"

One of the originators of the Week of Prayer as we know it today, which invites Christians from all denominations to enter into the intention of Christ's own prayer as we humbly intercede for unity

among his disciples (John 17), was Father Paul Couturier. A frequent correspondent and friend, he lent his prayerful support to the founding sisters of the community, women of the Swiss Reformed tradition who began their adventure of common life in the 1930s. Through his extensive correspondence, Couturier worked hard to create a network of prayer among monastics – Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant – women and men who would pray fervently all year long for the reconciliation and renewal of the churches, forming a kind of virtual community, an "[invisible monastery](#)" of unity. In 1940, during the dark days of the Second World War, he wrote to Sister Marguerite de Beaumont that the fledgling community at Grandchamp was a sign of hope, becoming a centre where those who work for Christian unity might be "formed and reformed". "I sense," he wrote, "that the first real Monastery of Christian Unity, such as I imagine it, will be Protestant."

The roots of the monastic tradition are deep in the life of the early Christian church and predate the separation of the churches in the fifth, the eleventh, or the sixteenth centuries. Thus, monastics from today's divided churches experience a profound unity that transcends ecclesial difference. They share a bond rooted in the experience of the search for oneness through a life of singular attention to the God of love. (The word "monk" comes from the Greek *monos*, meaning "one" or "single".) Through simplicity of life, common prayer, and with the support of others in community, each monastic journeys along a path of continual conversion.

Sister Anne-Emmanuel, Prioress of the Grandchamp community, reflects on the search for oneness with God lived out in the context of community:

Abiding in Christ, remaining united in Christ at all times and circumstances is not easy. How can I let him work through me and bring about the fruit of communion or friendship in spite of differences in personality, culture, generation, or liturgical sensibility? We are a group of very diverse women. Through our daily life in common our love for God and for others is tested. How can I say that I love God if I do not love my sister, my brother (1 John 4:20)? Without forgiveness, starting over day after day, we cannot mature and grow in this very human path to overcome conflict and inner struggles.

The rhythm of personal and communal prayer is essential to the formation of each monastic and of the whole community. Through the regular practice of prayer, coming humbly as we are into the presence of God, we discover our deepest selves and begin to see others as God sees them. Grounded in prayer, we come to discover ourselves as loved and are enabled to love others as God loves them.

The practice of abiding in the love of Christ, the vine, is essential as the churches continue on the path of growth in communion. All Christians – each one individually, each community, and all of us collectively – must remain deeply rooted in Christ, the very source of our life. From his self-giving love will flow the dynamic of our relationship with one another. In moments of silence, of listening to God's Word, and responding together in praise, we discover the profound bond of communion that unites us with disciples of Christ everywhere and the shared call to pour ourselves out in self-giving love and service to all.

While Paul Couturier promoted the annual observance of the Week of Prayer, he knew it was equally important that Christians pray for one another and for the communion of the churches all year long.

This is not a task that belongs to monastics alone. It is the responsibility of every baptized Christian. Each day we pray the Lord's Prayer, acknowledging God as loving parent and, implicitly, one another as brothers and sisters. When we ask that God's will be done, this includes God's desire for the reconciliation and unity of all the followers of Christ. As we observe the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year, perhaps we could resolve to pray more regularly and more intentionally for our fellow Christians – for the congregations of other Christians in our neighbourhood and for those who suffer in distant lands.

Praying together in the context of a global pandemic where we may not be able to gather in person, requires a greater effort on our part. It compels us to discover new and creative ways to reach out and connect with one another. Perhaps the experience of social and physical distancing might deepen in us a desire to be gathered anew and to let our unity in Christ once again bear the fruit of communion with one another.



[Catherine E. Clifford](#) is Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology in the Faculty of Theology and Founding Director of the Research Center on Vatican II and 21st Century Catholicism at Saint Paul University, Ottawa. Her teaching and research are focused in the areas of ecclesiology and ecumenism. She is presently a member of the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission.

In addition, she has served as a delegate to the Global Christian Forum (2016-2018) and a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue of Canada (1994-2015).

The Ticket

Has it ever occurred to you that neither Herod nor his scribes could see the star the Magi saw? Otherwise they might have followed it themselves to discover the place where Jesus lay. No – only the Magi could see the star and that was because they were visionaries, men who believed in the possibility of the impossible.

Men like Herod and his scribes had no such inclination. Having a somewhat paranoid or rigidly orthodox view of reality, they feared the possible as much as the impossible. Their minds were closed to any other notion of reality than the self-justifying one they possessed – and therefore so were their hearts, their imaginations, their eyes. They saw no star and what's more: they reveal in their later massacre of the innocents their determination to prevent others from seeing any stars, any deeper meaning to life – their determination to eradicate all visionaries, poets, to repress the creative imagination every child is born with -- all notion, for instance, that life for each of us could be in any way a Journey of the Magi whereby we feel we too are following some star toward realms and experiences ineffable.

For instance, Herod might have scoffed at me when as a boy of fourteen I was accepted by a seminary situated on New York's Hudson River, a mind-boggling one hundred

and thirty miles from my home in Philadelphia and, as I read the train schedule, became fascinated by the names of the stations along the way: Tarrytown, Ossining, Croton-on-Hudson, Verplanck, Peekskill, Garrison. "It's nothing but a train schedule," Herod might say. But to me each name was exotic. Each stimulated my imagination the way the names of towns and people in some novel seduce one into reading on to discover what might happen beyond the novel's opening page. This was to be for me no mere journey from one place to another (as Herod might declare) but a journey of discovery at the end of which I might eventually find my Self – even as the Magi found an infant in a manger.

Be like the Magi. Be like the poets among us. Never lose confidence in your imagination, in your conviction that life is more profound than the media and business world and habit make it out to be. Never lose sight of the star, the sparkle you sense you see in the people around you and the seemingly insignificant things you experience in life. Be like the Catholic poet Anne Porter (to whom Mary Shea introduced me) who one day found a ticket in her purse and had no idea what it was for. It had a number on it and the words INDIANA TICKET COMPANY. On the reverse side it said KEEP THIS TICKET. And so she did, on the night table beside her bed – because being a poet she knew it to be no mere stub of paper but a signal of dimensions exciting – or as she puts it:

*I keep it carefully / Because I am old / Which means / I'll soon
be leaving / For another country // Where possibly / Some
blinding-bright / Enormous angel / Will stop me / At the
border // And ask / To see my ticket*

--Geoff Wood, 1/3/21

