

Dear Parishioners

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It is the official end of the Christmas season and now we will return to "ordinary time" until the start of the season of Lent. Before Vatican II, the Christmas season ended on February 2, which was called "Candlemas Day". This was the day when all the candles that were to be used in the church in the coming year were blessed. Now we call February 2 the Feast of Presentation. The Feast of the Presentation was also a day in which many religious sisters entered the convent for their novitiate formation.

St. Pope John Paul II brought to the Vatican the tradition of a bigger-than-life outdoor Nativity display in St. Peter's Square. Interestingly enough, St. Pope John Paul II kept the Vatican Nativity scene up until February 2! So, if anyone gives you a hard time because your Christmas decorations are still up, don't tell people that you procrastinate; rather, tell people you are a traditionalist!

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is an appropriate time to reflect upon our own baptisms. For the vast majority of us, we were baptized as infants. As infants, we could not choose to believe in Jesus or not; our parents and godparents made that choice on our behalf. However, as adults, we have to choose to live out the baptismal promises made by our parents and godparents. It is one of the reasons why everyone renews their baptismal promises on Easter Sunday. Each and every Easter, we are challenged to re-affirm, as adults, our baptismal promises.

Baptism is not a simple ritual; baptism has actual, powerful effects! At our baptism, we were washed free from original sin, became a member of God's family and became a temple of the Holy Spirit. As you can see, Baptism is a powerful sacrament. So, let us live as baptized, converted, transformed people!

We need to ask ourselves: Have I taken my baptismal promises (to reject sin and Satan and to live a life of holiness) seriously? Do I try to draw closer to God day by day? As a parent with young children, am I doing all I can to raise my son or daughter in the Catholic faith? These are important questions for each one of us to answer.

Remember: Together, we can do something beautiful for God.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian

PS: As I write this letter, they are installing the front doors of the Church. They should be in by this weekend. While this project took much longer than I had hoped, I do hope you like the doors; after all, you did vote on them! The last phase of the project is to replace the inner doors of the Church. As you may recall, the inner doors will have a stained-glass panel, rather than the clear glass panel that is there currently. Also, we need to look at the vestibules. The main vestibule (narthex) needs better lighting and there seems to be a little leak on top. A roofer is coming in to give it a look.

Also, I hope you like the new signage on the property. It will allow first-time visitors a chance to know where everything is. We have installed some additional lighting near the school as well.