

After the Heart of Jesus ...

*After Jesus was baptized,
he came up from the water and behold,
the heavens were opened for him,
and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove
and coming upon him.
And a voice came from the heavens, saying,
“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*



This weekend we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which concludes the Christmas season. At His baptism by John, the identity of Jesus was made known. A voice cried out from above as a dove descended, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.”

At our baptism, our identity, too, is made known as we become sons and daughters of God the Father. Please take some time on today to bring out the old Baptism pictures of your children, perhaps light their Baptismal candles and hold during the meal prayer, and remind one another of the call to live as a son or daughter of God. Life would be much different if we tried to live up to our true calling rather than trying to live up to standards the world and others sometimes set before us.

As we reflect on how God calls us in Baptism, this week we will also celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week. Each of us is given a vocation through baptism, a way in which we can say “Yes” to God in furthering the mission of Christ. I served thirteen years as the diocesan vocation director sharing the message of God’s call and especially inviting men to consider the possibility of priesthood. Please pray in a special way this week for all who are responding to the call to priesthood, and please pray that young people from our parish will choose to give God the first chance with their lives and consider a priestly or religious vocation.

We hope to restart the St. Joseph Table tradition. An organizational meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 15, at 7:00 PM, in the Parish House basement. I am hopeful that this larger event will also start additional smaller social activities within the parish. All help is welcome!

Next weekend many of our teens (over 80 people in all!) are participating in the Discovery Retreat. The retreat theme is “Here I am,” and the retreatants are given opportunities to deepen their friendship with Christ. I pray that the effects of the retreat will be lasting for our young people. I am also grateful for the many adults and others who are working so hard for the success of this retreat.

THANK YOU for your ongoing generous response to stewardship. Today’s bulletin shares the good news about Christmas and other collections. \$273,805 was collected in December towards a Stewardship goal of \$255,000. Of course we need to sustain that generosity and sense of stewardship throughout the year if we will continue to meet the financial responsibilities of supporting our parish and our many ministries. The collection for Father Mario’s birthday parties for poor children brought in over \$14,000. At our recent staff meeting, Father Mario mentioned that three parties for over 1500 children have already been scheduled, and they are also able to provide the children with book bags and school supplies. We wish Father Mario safe travel as he leaves for the Philippines tomorrow and returns in early February. THANK YOU, again, for all the ways you have contributed to help Father Mario.

WOW

Because Easter is very early this year, we only have a short time before Lent begins on February 6. We are making plans for a very special Lent this year, including a Parish Mission from February 17 to 20. The focus will be on healing, and the pinnacle of the Mission will be a Healing Mass on Wednesday, February 20. Please mark these dates on your calendar and look for more information to come.

As we thank God for the gift of Baptism, may we be graced this week to live ...

After the Heart of Jesus!

Father John