



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY January 15 & BEYOND



I have so many memories of worship as a child. I grew up as an Episcopalian, attending Grace Church, Sterling IL. It gave me a great foundation as a Christian as well. I found the symbols of the church to be fascinating, especially the stained glassed windows, crosses and images. I thought the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was especially beautiful.

But, today I'm reminded of the green brocade frontal with the embroidered Lamb of God. Because of the worship season, the green frontal was on the altar for over half the year. I got a lot of opportunity to admire it and reflect on it. I remember thinking about what it means for Jesus to be the Lamb of God, and why it was perfect for the altar.

In today's gospel, John the Baptist looks to Jesus and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29). We only find this in John's Gospel, but it is an important declaration of faith and understanding. It's interesting that John says this on two occasions and Andrew and another disciple go follow Jesus.

It is for them an actual 'turning point,' because they turn from following John to following Jesus. John had told his disciples that Jesus ranked ahead of him, and the Holy Spirit was present at his baptism. "And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God," (1:34).

Son of God and Lamb of God, both are powerful statements of identity. It takes me back to the beautiful frontal that caught my eye. There will always be something gentle and peaceful about a lamb. I smile just thinking about them, but there is so much more than that. Jesus is not a lamb in a petting zoo, but the Son of God who gave himself for us.

It is sacrifice that makes Jesus the Lamb of God. Anyone who heard John speak must have immediately thought of the lamb offering of the Passover. A central image of faith for Israel, the blood and sacrifice of the lamb stands as a reminder of the salvation of Israel from bondage in Egypt. The blood of the lamb, brushed over

the door of the household meant that God ‘passed over’ that family. They would live to rise up in freedom.

So, to call Jesus the Lamb of God means that he is the Chosen One who will offer his life as a sacrifice for us. Later, the Baptist will say, “he must increase and I must decrease,” (3:30). That is so, but both John and Jesus face persecution and death. John’s death at the hands of foolish Herod is a precursor of Jesus’ death for us all.

And yet they follow him. Indeed, Andrew finds his brother Simon and brings him to Jesus. “Come and see” (1:39) are words of invitation to the disciples and to us. We are followers of the Lamb of God, and his sacrifice calls us to a sacrifice and offering of ourselves. I love to sing, “O, Lamb of God,” but when I do I should remember that the Lamb invites his people to a life of sacrifice and service. We do not know where this will lead us, but we can have confidence in the one we follow.

Father Steven L. Schuneman

Readings for this Sunday – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 49:1-7 Psalm 40:1-10 1 Corinthians 1:1-9 John 1:29-41

Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)
10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)
—The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY 7:00p (AA) Doctors’ Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary’s Chapel)
9:30a Mass (St. Mary’s Chapel)

AA Meetings

6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)
8:00p Ladies’ Group (Fireside Room)
8:15p Men’s Group (Parish Hall)