



ALL SAINTS'

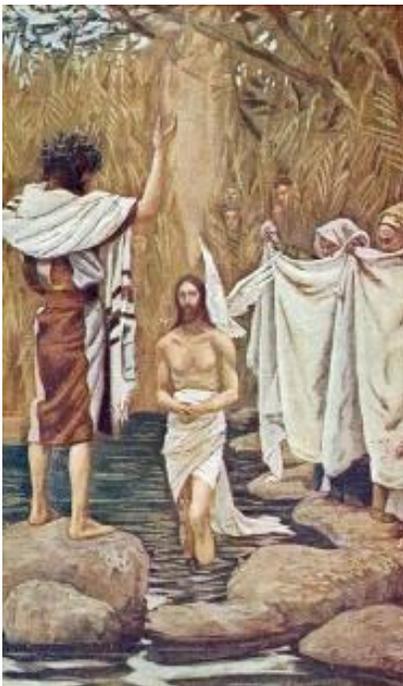
CHURCH

"Our mission is to bring the good news of Jesus Christ's love to our entire community through traditional Anglo-Catholic worship, fellowship, outreach, and Christian formation."

Our Vision: *"We strive to be a haven of healing, reconciliation, joy and peace in service to our wider community and beyond, so that our example in prayer and practice may reflect Christ's love for us all."*

THIS SUNDAY — January 9 & Beyond

"The All-inclusive Covenant"



This coming Sunday is the celebration of Our Lord's Baptism at the Jordan River, and the day is also a prioritized Sunday for baptisms in several churches, including the Episcopal Church. Even if a baptism is not celebrated, there is a provision for the renewal of baptismal vows in the liturgy of the day.

The inclusion of this commemoration within the Epiphany context dates back to the first centuries, in which Our Lord's Baptism was an indispensable part of the Epiphany--or Theophany--of our Lord, as it is also known in Eastern Churches.

The words spoken to Jesus and the physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the shape of a dove at the moment of His baptism are closely linked to the idea of manifestation or revelation of His divine filiation. In fact, this manifestation is taken by many as the unmistakable sign of Jesus' true nature, and the prelude to His salvific mission in the world.

What happens during Jesus' baptism is the fulfilment of what John the Baptist himself had predicted when they asked him if he was the Messiah, the anointed one of God. He had clearly pointed away from himself and to the true Christ in the person of Jesus, "as the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire."

And then it happens. The declaration of the voice coming from the Heavens and the physical manifestation of God's Spirit both corroborate that Jesus of Nazareth is the beloved Son of God in whom God is well pleased, and that God's Spirit now rests with Him powerfully to enable Him to carry the Good News of Salvation to all.

Even though Jesus' ministry starts within the confines of Galilee and is later on expanded to Judea, it is clear from the reading of the New Testament that the Good News of liberation from sin and death that Jesus proclaims is not to be confined to the Jewish people. The ending of Matthew's Gospel clearly puts in Jesus' lips the commission to spread this Good News to the ends of the earth, and as a mark of this new all-inclusive covenant, Jesus instructs His followers to baptize all in the name of the Holy Trinity.

The New Covenant or Testament is for all the peoples of the world. It is God's initiative and entering into it implies that we all become God's true children, doers of His life-and-love-giving will, and carriers of the Good News to all others we come in contact with.

This covenant implies belonging to the Holy Assembly—the Church, so as to support one another and lovingly care for one another in His faith. It also implies being nourished by His Word and sacraments and encouraging others to feed on these and all other means that the Holy Trinity uses for the nourishment of the faithful.

In the Book of Acts of the Apostles, which has also properly been called the Book of Acts of the Holy Spirit, we read that Peter speaks to Cornelius—a Roman centurion—and his family about salvation through our faith in Jesus Christ the Lord of all. He states that he has come to understand that “God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.”

It must have been really hard for Peter—a convinced Jew-- to come to this realization, and if we read the story we realize the Holy Spirit pushed him hard to come to it.

The fact is that, unfortunately, so many centuries later, there are still those who question who should be included or excluded from God's all-inclusive covenant of love and grace. The criteria may be different from those of the Jews, but the result is still as sad, or even worse, because there is really no excuse for any kind of bigotry among 21st-century Christians.

If there should be any kind of exclusion, it is the one we ourselves create by not entering the baptismal covenant with true intent and commitment.

God is not asking us to pay any price for being adopted by Him as His beloved children, but there is no way we can enter God's family unless we are ready to share with our brothers and sisters, the rest of humankind and all the creatures in creation.

Family necessarily implies true loving relationships, and these are most of the time forged amidst hardships, in the midst of hurts that need to be forgiven, and within the acceptance of traits that we do not really like so much. Only tons and tons of love can make this possible.

But God is the infinite source of all forgiveness, all tolerance, all acceptance, and all true love.

That is why, if we want to keep His all-inclusive covenant properly, we need to stop and pray, and ask His Holy Spirit to give us the strength to keep it alive in us.

No, the renewal of the Baptismal vows is not a spurious ceremony, but a true need for all faithful Christians. May God's Spirit renew His covenant in our lives.

Fr. Carlos E. Expósito, Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Baptism of Our Lord

Jeremiah 42:1-9 Psalm 89:20-29 Acts 10:34-38 Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

CALENDAR

Note: We are worshipping in our historic church. The service will also be on Zoom. The service time is 10am. Tuesday Noon Mass and Friday Morning Prayer are held in All Saints' St. Mary Chapel.

SUNDAY The Baptism of Our Lord

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

Christian Formation gathering at 11:30am in the Rector's study

1:00pm Mass in Spanish St. Mary Chapel

TUESDAY Noon Mass in St. Mary Chape

FRIDAY 10:00am Morning Prayer in St. Mary's Chapel

SATURDAY **Societies of Mary Day of Devotion**

11:00am Rosary in St. Mary Chapel

11:30am Mass in St. Mary Chapel

Potluck Luncheon in the Parish Hall

SUNDAY The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

10:00am Mass in All Saints' Church

Join Zoom Meeting from our web site at www.allsaintschurch.org

Recording of Mass available before noon at www.allsaintschurch.org

Christian Formation and First Communion Instruction for Children

Ages 5-12 in the Parish Hall from 10:00am-10:45am

1:00pm Mass in Spanish St. Mary Chapel

OUR CORE VALUES:

- Welcoming strangers like old friends
- Embracing the Anglo-Catholic tradition
- Being dependable members of a caring community
- Respecting each other's differences
- Being faithful stewards of God's gift
- Remembering that God loves everyone unconditionally