

St. Boniface

Catholic Church

stboniface.net

230 1st St. NW - Lidgerwood, ND 58053

Also Serving St. Martin of Tours, Geneseo and Sts. Peter & Paul, Cayuga

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saint Boniface
Saturday - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday - 8:30 a.m.

Saint Martin of Tours - Geneseo
Sunday - 10:30 a.m.

Saints Peter & Paul - Cayuga
Sunday - 12:00 p.m. (noon)

January 12, 2025 - The Baptism of the Lord

Beneath the Surface

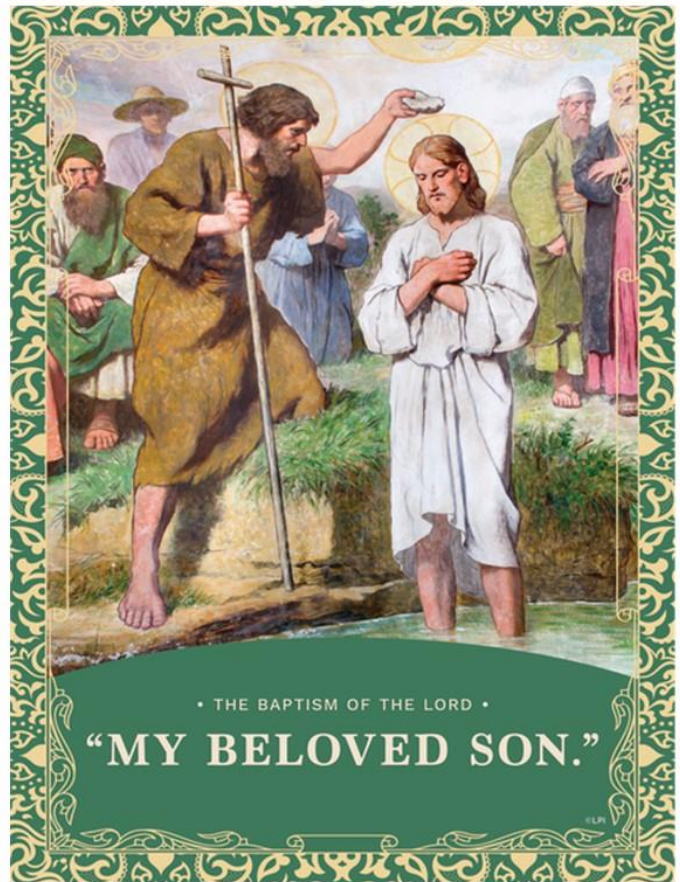
When I was seventeen, I wasn't sure that I wanted to be confirmed. It was a rough period in my life, and I was having some intense questions and doubts. It upset my mother, understandably. She knew that, at such a pivotal and difficult moment, I needed the grace of the sacrament more than ever. So, she called our priest and asked him to talk to me.

After that meeting, I made the decision to be confirmed.

To be honest, I can't remember anything he said to me. All I remember is that he sat with me. He listened to me. He let me talk and talk and talk (and cry). And when he said whatever he said, whatever it is that I cannot remember, it was obvious that he had listened to me.

Reading today's Gospel, it makes perfect sense that everyone thought John the Baptist was the Messiah. He was the guy pouring the water. Of course it seemed natural that he would be "the one." The one they were all waiting for.

But instead, the Messiah was the man who came to be baptized. He was the one who descended into the waters, submerging himself in our experience of death and pain and sorrow — and in doing so, he sanctified it. He made it a means of redemption. Jesus is our Savior, yes. When we dig ourselves a hole of sin and confusion and we can't climb out, he is the one who brings us back to the surface. But he doesn't pull us out; he lifts us. He jumps down into the pit. He looks around. He offers his hand, gives us a leg up, and by his strength and not our own, we are brought back into the light.



Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

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Weekly Mass Schedule



Sunday Liturgies		
Saturday, Jan. 11	5:00 pm (St. B.)	† Kathleen Schultz
Sunday, Jan. 12	8:30 am (St. B.)	† Gerald Baker
	10:30 am (St. M.)	Pro Popula
	12:00 pm (Sts. P&P)	Special Intention
Weekday Liturgies		
Monday, Jan. 13	NO MASS	
Tuesday, Jan. 14	10:00 am (St. B.)	† Leona Willprecht
Wed., Jan. 15	10:00 am (Dakota Est.)	† Tom Kaczynski
Thursday, Jan. 16	10:00 am (St. B.)	† George Novotny
Friday, Jan. 17	10:00 am (St. B.)	† James Kastner
Sunday Liturgies		
Saturday, Jan. 18	5:00 pm (St. B.)	† Peter & Eva Slabik
Sunday, Jan. 19	8:30 am (St. B.)	Pro Popula
	10:30 am (St. M.)	Special Intention
	12:00 pm (Sts. P&P)	† Jim Woytassek

Reconciliation Schedule

St. Boniface: Saturday & Sunday – Before/after Mass
Thursday – after Mass
St. Martin: Sunday – Before and after Mass
Sts. Peter & Paul – Before and after Mass

Prayer Requests

Please keep the following people in your prayers:
 Dan Schmit - Tony Schouviller - Joan Moerke
 Shelby Northrop - Peggy Harles - Nick Podliska
 Rick Kane - Dan Frolek - Brad Meyer - Shirley Ahrens
 Barb Perry
 If you have any imminent prayer requests, please call or text Cindy at 701-640-1401.

All Parishes

Eucharistic Adoration – Please come and spend time with Jesus on Thursdays in adoration, anytime from 5am – Midnight. We are still in need for someone to share the 9-10 am, 3-4 pm and 6-7 pm adoration slot. Please contact Sharon at 612-790-1211 or 538-7010 if you are able to help.

CCD/CYO - There will be class this week.

Jubilee 2025 Begins

Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of St. Peter Basilica, Rome, on Christmas Eve, and launched the

Jubilee of the Year 2025. Faithful Catholics may receive the Jubilee Year indulgence by visiting one of the Jubilee Sites in the Diocese of Fargo. These pilgrimage sites include:

- St. Mary's Cathedral / Our Lady of Guadalupe Adoration Chapel, Fargo
- Maryvale Retreat Center, Valley City
- St. Therese the Little Flower Church, Rugby
- The Basilica of St. James, Jamestown
- Carmel of Mary, Wahpeton
- St. Michael's Church, Grand Forks

KC Meeting – Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 7pm.

St. Martin's Brotherly Help Society and Cemetery Association will meet on Sunday January 19 at 5pm.

After the Baptism of the Lord, All Eyes Are on Us

This Sunday is like a second Christmas. The promises we heard in Advent are brought up again and applied to one event: The Baptism of Lord Year B, Jesus Christ being baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Here are five takeaways from this Sunday, taken from the Extraordinary Story podcast and previous This Sunday columns at this site.

First: To understand the Baptism of Jesus, and our baptism, you have to understand the wrath of God.

This Sunday's Gospel is from Luke, and it comes right after Jesus says to the crowds who are coming to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" He warned people that "every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

Thus, the Bible positions Baptism as a way to be preserved from the wrath of God. That is something that makes us extremely uncomfortable. We know God is love and that he only the best for us, so it sounds wrong to say we have to "hide" from "God's wrath."

But the Bible warns us of the wrath of God constantly, from beginning to end. It is real, and needs to be taken extremely seriously. Bishop Robert Barron says that the way to think of God's wrath is as God's "passion to put things right."

I like to think of the wrath of God as God telling us a winter storm is coming and saying, "Get ready now. Get what you need to stay warm and alive, before it is too late, or you will die." When we ignore him, he insists even more. God doesn't have human emotions, but calling his urgency "wrath" gets the truth across to us forcefully: God says act now or die, and he means it.

Only, with God, what he is most passionate about is sin — which is death to our soul. He says, "The devil wants you to die and be miserable forever. Stop putting your trust in him. Stop taking all the talents and gifts I gave you and using them the way Satan wants. That will destroy you. Stop building barricades against my love. Stop blocking me out. Do it now or your soul will be lost forever."

John the Baptist shared God's forceful message, telling people to put aside the ways of death, and he said it urgently. His baptism was a Baptism of repentance, a way of telling God you got the message and want to be ready.

Second: But Jesus came not to be saved from the wrath to come, but to give us way out of what is coming.

Jesus came to be baptized as our model and as our source. He is our model because Jesus, who would take our sins to the cross to destroy them, wanted to show us the way to enter into his salvation. He did it by getting in the baptism line with sinners in order to show clearly what we must do. He carried our cross to show us how to trudge up the narrow way, he died on the cross with nothing to show us how to die to sin, and he got baptized to show us how to enter God's family.

But in each of these actions, he is also our source of strength and grace. Our crosses are lighter because he shared them, our death to sin is sweeter because it unites us to his sacrifice, and Baptism is a channel to our life in him because he went there first, also.

There is a Chuck Norris joke is that says that when Chuck Norris falls into a river, Chuck Norris doesn't get wet — the river gets Chuck Norrised. This is literally true in the Jordan River when Jesus enters it. Far from being blessed by the touch of the waters of Baptism, *Jesus* bless the waters of Baptism by touching *them*.

And since he did that, our Baptism has become the "short cut to salvation," says the Catechism, where God's wrath, which is really love, is expressed by washing our soul with water and giving it the sustenance it needs to stay alive in the storms to come, and to withstand the temptations of Satan that will follow.

Third: Thus, Baptism saves us by incorporating us into the life of the Trinity.

As John the Baptist says in this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus will baptize us not just with water but "with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Then, the Gospel shows us exactly what that means: "The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased.'"

We all experience the same thing at Baptism: The Spirit descends on us and gives us strength and grace, the Father is pleased with us, and we unite with the Son and his mission. Mary was the first to experience that, when the angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God ... and he will reign."

Then Elizabeth experienced the same reality when Mary visited her, and she was "filled with the Holy Spirit" and greeted Mary as "the mother of my Lord," and heard the great Magnificat prayer about the kingdom to come.

St. Paul applies this to each of us when, in the Letter to Titus, he says, "he saved us through the bath of rebirth and

renewal by the Holy Spirit ... so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life. "If we are Spirit-filled "heirs," then we are adopted sons and daughters of God.

Thus, our Baptism is the great moment that sees the reversal of the lie Satan told to Adam and Eve. Satan tricked them into the first sin by telling them sin would let them become like gods. Instead, sin brought death. Now, God gives us Baptism to truly become like Jesus, by being reborn through his death and resurrection and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

It incorporates us into the life of the Trinity and sets us loose on the world to do what Jesus did, as St. Peter puts it in the Book of Acts: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Fourth: History shows us how powerful this Baptismal "fire" is.

Once a large number of people literally share in the life of Jesus Christ and are adopted into the Trinity, the world changes. His love spreads like a fire.

Our Lord started with 12 Apostles and a number of disciples. By the year 100 AD that had become 7,500 Christians, then by the year 150 AD there were about 40,000. By 250 AD, there were 1.1 million Christians; in 350 AD, there were 34 million.

To this day, people who are anointed by Jesus Christ go about doing good as he did. The great untold story of the 20th Century was the enormous growth of the Church all over the world. In Africa, followers of Jesus grew from 10 million Christians to 400 million. India now has five times as many Catholics as Ireland. China will soon have more churchgoers than America.

In the 21st century, the same dynamic continues. God's grace multiplies much faster than we give it credit for, but it always starts with individual Christians who take their Baptism seriously.

The words of Isaiah in Sunday's First Reading apply to each of us who have been incorporated into Christ: "I have grasped you by the hand, I formed you and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations."

So, fifth: All eyes are on us.

At Advent and Christmas, John the Baptist's drum roll ended with all eyes on the Baby Jesus. At the Baptism of the Lord, all eyes are on us.

We learn that the question "Will Jesus Christ the newborn king transform the world, or not?" is really just a form of the question "Will the baptized people of Christ take Jesus seriously, or not?"

If we don't, the future will hold a world of hurt. If we do, we will set the world ablaze with the light of Christ.