

TRINITY NEWS

The Baptism of the Lord

We perceive a figure rising out of murky water at a sacred crossing in Israel. A luminous figure rising, water dripping over firm shoulders and the Dove winging its way from heaven. A voice slices the air from the heart of God calling him beloved and pleasing to God. The Dove of the Spirit whispers the words of God from Scripture to Jesus. The Baptizer was puzzled as to why the Messiah needed to be baptised. He didn't **need** to be baptised. He **wanted** to be baptised as a **sign** for us. He came to the Jordan and to John for that purpose. John's hesitation disappears in the sunlight and everything happens in an unstoppable script.

An old mosaic in Nazareth shows John the Baptizer walking him across the Jordan and back into the promised land. It is a legend in ceramic that may be true: the start of a new way home to God, a new exodus-pilgrimage to the promised land on a far shore.

We are always finding fresh ways to imitate Christ. We imitate the angels in singing to him. We imitate the shepherds in coming to him in great expectation. We imitate the Wise Men in bringing gifts and taking home far greater gifts than we brought. We imitate Mary in standing by his Cross and we reach out to touch him like she did at Nazareth when he stirred in the dark of the night as a child and whimpered. We imitate his prayers to the Father and we try to imitate his healing of souls and bodies and minds.

We bring our children to him and we splash water on them and we dip adults in imitation of something that happened at that sacred crossing that day; something that initiated Christ into a ministry that would never end.

We follow him home to God always looking for the path that he fashioned for us so that we can tread safely and securely on our way to him. We listen for his voice and feel his touch through the saints and holy ones who are his icons on earth.

We do nothing in the Church and outside it that does not bear in some way the imprint of his life and his words. The Holy Spirit rewinds his life for us, in us, and before our gaze. The Holy Spirit models Christ for us in streams of light and configurations drawn from the Scriptures.

Too much that is preached about Christ in the 21st century diminishes the mystery of his person, the power to create lasting images in others that was part of the enormous outreach of his person, and the intensely personal contact that he had with the heart of God that we all long for so much.

Every blast of a suicide bomber, every rocket that is fired, every bomb that falls on children, every tribal hatred that maims and wounds and kills, every person who is defiled by someone else, every reputation that is threaded by cruel tongues diminishes the enormous love that Christ unleashed in the world. His compass was the reign of God and an outreach of love that had no boundaries at all. This outreach was a focus of the heart of God which has no definable dimensions. Beware of anything and anyone that trumpets the name of God and yet raise their voice and their fist against the best of humanity. Listen to the gentle voices and the soft words of compassion in the world because they are more powerful and more lasting and more effective. They are the voices and sure results of the unstoppable script of Jesus. It was enacted in his Baptism and in all of his life and teaching, and it is available now through the Spirit of God. It is also available through those who truly love him and see him clearly, without manipulation or falsehood. They are the true imitators of Christ. Be of good heart as we enter this year of our Lord. Let us relax into ourselves deep down to the recesses of our soul, test the silence of God and listen for the directions from God that will sustain our life. Jesus listened that day at the Jordan. His response and the results still touch our lives.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Thursday, January 16.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10: a.m., Chapel.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

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

REMINDER:

**Parish Annual General Meeting (AGM), January 26, 2014 after
the 9:30 service**