

The Baptism of the Lord  
January 10, 2010  
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## Transitions

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7  
Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-38  
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Life is full of transitions. These transitions always give us opportunities to celebrate, as well as opportunities to reaffirm who we are and what we are about. For example, we just celebrated the New Year. New Year's Eve is, for many people, unlike any other evening throughout the year. It is marked with particular customs and rituals. There are fireworks, parties, special meals, dances, countdowns to the New Year, and countless other things. These are all ways that we celebrate the New Year. It is also a time for us to reflect on and reaffirm who we are and who we desire to be. This is most popularly done through New Year's resolutions, but it can happen in many other ways, too, including through prayer.

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The event marked an important transition in Christ's life, from the hidden years of Christ's time growing up in Nazareth to His public ministry. Because this transition from a hidden life in Nazareth to a very public life was an important one, it was something that needed to be celebrated. John the Baptist provided that celebration by formally Baptizing Jesus in the Jordan. Jesus did not need to be baptized because since He was sinless, but His baptism was a formal way to celebrate this important transition in His life.

Jesus' transition into public life was not only a time to celebrate, but it was also a time for His identity to be reaffirmed. We heard in our Gospel that it was God the Father who reaffirmed Christ's identity by saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). These words are composed from two Old Testament texts. "You are my beloved Son," comes from Psalm 2:7 and the words, "with you I am well pleased," come from Isaiah 42:1. When the Gospel authors wrote God the Father's words to His Son as a quote from the Old Testament, they must have understood the implications of those words, especially the ones from the prophet Isaiah. The prophet's words were referring to the coming Messiah and the broader context of the Isaiah passage also indicated the suffering and death the Messiah would endure for God's people. In this way, the transition that was celebrated at Jesus' baptism reaffirmed His identity as God's Son, and also indicated what He was to accomplish.

Our parish is going through an important transition right now regarding Hispanic ministry. Beginning a regularly scheduled Mass in Spanish for the first time in the history of our parish is something for us to celebrate! It reflects our parish's willingness to reach beyond the boundaries of our comfort zone and embrace new parishioners, much like we did decades ago when we welcomed the Vietnamese Catholics to Christ the King.

Not only is this a time to celebrate, but it is also a time for us to reaffirm our identity. Christ the King Catholic Church, more than any other parish I have been at, has the reputation of being a welcoming parish. This transition is a time for us to be reaffirmed in that gift and charism of hospitality. I have seen this in some very beautiful ways this week as I have received e-mails and phone calls from Anglos, Vietnamese, and Hispanics offering to help at the Spanish Masses. So many of these people noted that they are unable to speak Spanish, yet they wanted to help in any way possible. That is what hospitality is all about! That is a reaffirmation of who we are at Christ the King!

Hopefully, the weeks and months ahead will give our parish many opportunities to celebrate the transitions that are taking place, and hopefully all of those transitions will help us to remember who we are as individuals and who we are as a parish. We have an amazing parish and it does not surprise me at all that God has chosen to share us with even more people and cultures!

**SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISES:**

- ✚ What is the most significant transition in your life right now? What fears does the transition stir up in your heart? What hopes does it stir up? What might God desire to teach you through this transition? How is He reaffirming your identity?