

January 11, 2006
Wednesday of the First Week After the Epiphany

Gospel

Mark 1:4-11

And it happened: John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, proclaiming a baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sins, and people from the whole Judean country and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

And John was being clothed with camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he was proclaiming, "The one who is stronger than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with a holy spirit."

And it happened: Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee came and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And straightaway as he was **coming up** out of the water he saw the **heavens being ripped open** and the Spirit **coming down** on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the beloved. In you I favored."

Homily

This weekend we had our first-ever (and, I am now able to say, first *annual*) Pasta & Pizza With the Pastors, to thank our many worship assistants and ushers. The crowd was *AMAZING*. It just kept growing. First there were twenty. Then we had thirty. Then on Saturday morning I got a phone call from Pastor Mary telling me we were climbing into the sixties and we had to start planning more food. Food was an amazing draw. That same weekend we celebrated The Baptism of Our Lord and baptized little Tyler John Criscuolo at the 11:15 service. That too drew a crowd, as his family filled most of the sanctuary. We had dinner and a bath, food and water; we had it all! There's a reason God works in the basic stuff. It's what we need. It's so simple that we don't even think about it.

At the Children's Sermon on Sunday I invited the kids to look into the font, and there was this perfect moment when I picked up Christopher Criscuolo so he could see inside and he threw both arms up as if to say, huh? What am I supposed to see? He couldn't have done better if we had scripted it. There was nothing to it. It's a metal bowl. All we would put in it later was tap water. The food we shared later was not much more. It was primarily bread and tomato products, but it drew us by the dozens. The food we eat here in Holy Communion is even simpler. It's allegedly bread (and I must say, our hosts here taste a lot better than many I have eaten) and it's served with wine or juice. That's a quick and easy meal. Water, bread, & wine are basic. We consume them without even thinking about it. They are about as ordinary as you can get. Food and water draw every living thing to them, and all life depends upon them.

Friends of Christ, God is something that basic, that ordinary, that essential. Just as we need food and water to live we need God to live. Just as we eat and drink food and water we eat and drink God. Just as food and water draw every living thing to them God draws every living thing to God. God is our food and drink. God is our sustainer. Friends of Christ food and drink have drawn us here this morning. The body and blood of Christ have drawn us here. The Word has drawn us here. The waters of baptism in which we each swim have drawn us here. The coffee and tea and donuts and grapes in the overheated kitchen have drawn us here! They have drawn us here because God, our source of life and our food, is in them and in the community in which we share them.

Friends of Christ, God is in the basics so that we may know that God is with us. We can eat the bread and drink the wine, and God is with us. We can hear the Word and God is with us. We can crowd around the kitchen table and God is with us. We can leave this place when this Holy Communion ends and God is with us. God takes the water, the bread and the wine, things that are ordinary, and makes them into things that are extraordinary: the promise of forgiveness, the assurance of the resurrection, the abiding presence of God with us in the body and blood of Christ. In everything we do—in *anything* we do—God takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary. As we go about our day today and perform whatever tasks await us, no matter how great or small, God is making those things extraordinary and God is with us. Let's share in the feast. Amen