

The Baptism of Jesus: Sunday, January 10, 2020

St. Vincent de Paul Church, Baltimore

A Reflection on the Gospel

This Sunday marks the end of the Christmas Season and the beginning of Ordinary Time.

On this day we also begin a year of reading Gospel According to Mark, the earliest Gospel, and a source text for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. We circle through these three evangelists in a three-year cycle.

So, welcome back to the story as Mark tells it. A rapid-running, action-filled rendition. A short Gospel that can be read in one sitting.

All three of the synoptic Gospels tell the story of Jesus being baptized by John and a voice from the heavens announcing, "This is my beloved son." All three accounts say that Jesus was set apart, pointed out as the leader.

The next thing that Jesus does, after being announced as a leader to all, is to go into the desert. Perhaps he needs to prepare himself for the public life and to plan what it means to be anointed.

How can we, who have also been baptized, prepare ourselves for our public life? We are all called, as the prophet Isaiah says in today's reading, to bring liberty to captives and to help the blind see.

What binds you? What holds your community captive?
What blinds you and the society around you?

For many of us this is a time to see how *racism* binds us and blinds us.

I want to start this time of racial reckoning by learning more about these six African American Catholics who have been proposed for canonization as saints: Mother Mary Lange, Pierre Toussaint, Henriette DeLille, Augustus Tolton, Thea Bowman and Julia Greeley.

In this strange year of illness and withdrawal from the world, I invite you to join me in looking for guidance from these six who lived as saints among us.

Maureen Daly