

The Covenant

That water must have felt good.

Granted, the Jordan river was murky and teeming with various pungent smells of desert growths, scuttling creatures, dry dust, and of course the unbathed bodies of ordinary people. Still it felt good. John the Baptist's voice boomed out over the waiting crowd. "Repent!"

Maybe you remember your own river swims as a kid, how it felt to sink into thick muddy water, how the mixture could go up your nose and, uck, into your mouth. And you can recall how it sounded when you dove up through the water-surface again.

Here in the desert, people had come to the water for baptism. The river must have been a potent symbol for them, since their means of cleanliness were limited.

Jesus was one of people. He entered John's baptism just like the others, entirely submerging his road-weary body when told to.

But when he came up from underwater, a great surprise waited for him. The New American Bible translates it this way: the heavens were "torn open." Out of the torn sky came the voice of the Holy Spirit, to announce to the world that God's ancient covenant of love now was before them in person, in the flesh—dirty and wet, just as they were.

Covenant.

What is a covenant? To put it simply, an agreement. God said, "I agree to be your God and you agree to be my people." This proposal was re-stated many times in ancient scripture, with varying degrees of success. But now Jesus had come into the world to actually become this covenant. He was the most profound agreement possible of God and humanity. He was both halves of the covenant, God's and humans'.

Many centuries earlier, the book of Isaiah had predicted this moment. The following words were uttered during the exile of Israel in Babylon:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit. He shall bring forth justice to the nations. (First Reading)

After so many centuries had passed, the Holy Spirit was descending now upon Jesus, and a voice was saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The time had come, after such a long anticipation.

What would this brand new covenant life in God be like? It would be gentle ("not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street"). It would deliver God's love to the unkempt, the dripping wet, the honest (and dishonest), the alluring (and repulsive) people of everyday life. Instead of excluding them, Jesus, who had become the covenant, would invite people down from trees where they scrambled to see him. He would say "of course I do" in answer to "Lord if you want to you can cure me." He will pity the soldiers who were ordered to kill him. He will agree to the shrewd thief's cry for pity.

We cannot doubt that he will reach into the heart and soul of each of us, even into the parts that so shame and embarrass us.

Most of us have already swum in this particular river, now known as baptismal water. It washes us clean, washes us free so that today we may surge up and out of our sin and reluctance, so that we may be surprised by the great words Jesus now says to each and every of us:

"You are my beloved; in you I am well pleased." (Gospel)

John Foley, SJ

The Baptism of the Lord January 10, 2021

St. Stephens Indian Mission

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Sacrament of Reconciliation & Sacrament of the Sick

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and penitent will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick is available for those who are in need, terminal and to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.

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Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you Welcome!
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The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.

Readings January 11th through January 17th:

Mon: Heb 1:1-6; Ps 97:1, 2b, 6, 7c, 9; Mk 1:14-20
Tue: Heb 2:5-12; Ps 8:2ab, 5-9; Mk 1:21-28
Wed: Heb 2:14-18; Ps 105:1-4, 6-9; Mk 1:29-39
Thur: Heb 3:7-14; Ps 95:6-7c, 8-11; Mk 1:40-45
Fri: Heb 4:1-5, 11; Ps 78:3, 4bc, 6c-8; Mk 2:1-12
Sat: Heb 4:12-16; Ps 19:8-10, 15; Mk 2:13-17
Sun: 1 Sm 3:3b-1, 19; Ps 40:2, 4, 7-10; 1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20; Jn 1:35-42

Parish Collection

Last week mail in collection \$1115

"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7

THANK YOU to all who have continued to make financial contributions to St. Stephens Indian Mission through these most trying times! God Bless!

Mass Intentions this week

1/10: Sunday	+Joe Malek
Sunday	For the people
1/13: Wednesday 5pm	+Edward LaMorte
1/14: Thursday 7:15am	Thanksgiving and pray for unity and harmony of our Catholic family throughout the world.
1/15: Friday 5pm	+Richard Shelton
1/17: Sunday	Charlene Gambler Brown
Sunday	For the people

As we continue to celebrate Mass at St. Stephens, we are limited to 10 people in attendance as we follow the Wind River Intertribal Council's resolution. If you would like to be added to the rotating list of parishioners for Mass please call the office or email the parish office. Please also email the parish office (melissa.brown@saintstephensmission.com) to make sure your contact information is on file with the Parish as this is our primary way to contact you when things change or if we have an event you might be interested in. Thank you!

Please remember that Bishop Steven's general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in effect for the duration of Mass attendance restrictions. Mass is available for viewing on K2 Television at 9am and/or you may watch via livestream on St. Margaret's or Holy Rosary's FB pages.

Face masks are required at Mass. Please use hand sanitizer, refrain from exchanging handshakes during the Sign of Peace and maintain at least six feet apart from parishioners (except if you are in the same household) including processing to receive the Eucharist. If you are not feeling well and are scheduled to attend Mass please stay home and call the office so we can switch you with another parishioner until you feel well. Please keep our church family safe. We appreciate your cooperation as we move forward, safely, together.

Please pray for the family of the deceased:

+Georgianna Crawford

+Alden Harris

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Having Mass offered for an anniversary, marriage, special occasion, or in memory of someone is a special gift. Cards are available at the office.

Diocesan guideline is \$10.00 for Mass.

Christ is born!

Let us adore Him!

A PRAYER FOR THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

