



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

We concluded the Christmas season this past Monday with the celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. We now enter into the liturgical season of “Winter Ordinary” time. Another word used to refer to this time is “counted.” Today is the second Sunday of ordinary time, which continues through the seventh Sunday of ordinary time, leading us into the holy Lenten season. May we give thanks, recognize, and count the blessings and graces we share in our lives as followers of Jesus.

While preparing for Mass for the Baptism of the Lord, I found the following quotes speaking about the power and importance of Jesus’ Baptism: “The scriptural account of Christ’s Baptism has beautiful connections to powerful stories of God’s action in the Old Testament. In the creation account (Gen 1:2), God’s Spirit is described as a wind hovering over the water; that same Spirit is shown over the waters of the Jordan here to show that in Baptism we are made a new creation in Christ. Christ, as the Second Adam, has opened up a truly new form of life with God, and in Christian Baptism, we die with Christ and rise with Him to this new life of Resurrection (2 Tim 2:11, Romans 6:3-5, Benedict XVI, Jesus of Nazareth, Volume II, p. 274).

The word “baptize” comes from the Greek word that means to “plunge” or “immerse.” In baptism, the faithful are immersed and plunged into Christ’s death; they emerge from the water with Christ as a new creation through His resurrection. The water becomes a way to new life, much like the Israelites passed through the Red Sea in their liberation from captivity in Egypt.”

When you visit Holy Name Cathedral in downtown Chicago, located in the sanctuary you will see their new and enlarged baptistry. Sitting in the pews, looking up to the altar and sanctuary, the baptistry is to your right. The location of and the increase in size of their font was eye catching to me when I was at the cathedral. If you have prayed at St. Mary of Vernon, St. Mary of the Assumption in Mundelein, Holy Cross in Deerfield, St. Patrick’s in Wadsworth, or other parishes with larger fonts you have seen various styles and designs in local parishes. These larger fonts allow for the baptism of catechumens coming into the faith through the RCIA.

Historically, in the Catholic Church, baptistry shapes have communicated a powerful statement. (If you have ever visited the Duomo, in Florence, Italy, the baptistry is in its own building outside of the cathedral.) Whether called fonts or pools, these deliberate designs were generally large enough to hold an adult. In the early church, catechumens were baptized after the long dark Easter Vigil. Baptism births a person to a new Christian life. Walking down into the water and up out of it helps the newly baptized person experience dying with Christ, being buried with Christ, rising with Christ, and living with Christ. The sacrament of baptism in the Catholic Church has water poured over the head of those being baptized three times, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian blessing is part of the Catholic Sacrament of Baptism. When pools and fonts are large enough to bathe in, they emphasize baptism as a washing away or cleansing of sins.

Conversations have taken place at meetings of the Parish Staff, Parish Council, and Parish Finance Council about updating and enlarging the baptismal font at our parish. These conversations started in 2021 and continue this year. The pedestal font at St. Mary’s is suited for infant baptism, but not adult baptism. We are able to enlarge our font so that adults as well as infants can be prayerfully and properly baptized into the faith of the Catholic Church. *Inspired Artisans, Ltd.* has been working with us in designing and planning for the new font that will fit into the church architecture at St. Mary’s. They are based out of Milwaukee and are known worldwide for the beauty and quality of their work. We are waiting to hear from them, regarding supply chain issues in the materials needed for our parish project. As more information is known I will make sure to share it with the Parish Staff, Parish Council, Parish Finance Council and the parishioners. The hope is that we will be able to have the expansion of our current pedestal font completed this year.

Later this month we will again celebrate **Catholic Schools Week**. The children will participate in the 10:00am Mass on Sunday, January 29, singing their hearts out and lifting the spirits of those who pray with them. For more information regarding registering children at the School of St. Mary for next year, you can reach out to Mrs. Mandy Castle, School of St. Mary Director of Admissions, at: mcastle@schoolofstmary.org.

Thanks to those who made a generous gift to St. Mary’s at Christmas. It is our hope that we will achieve the budgeted amount for Christmas as contributions continue to be received at the Parish Office.

May we turn to God who strengthens us in living with Christ in 2023,

Fr. Mike Nacur