

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A
Fr. Chad S. Green
Mary, Queen of Peace Catholic Church
Sammamish, Washington
15 January 2023

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
Psalm 40
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
(John 1:14a, 12a) John 1:29-34

God Reveals and Calls Today

We changed from Christmas Season to Ordinary Time this past week on Tuesday, which makes today the first day of our Second Week of Ordinary Time. We began the new liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent, and this is Year A in the three-year cycle of Sunday Readings. We'll primarily be hearing from the Gospel of Matthew throughout this year. But every year—whether we're in the year for hearing from Matthew, Mark, or Luke—we always begin Ordinary Time with a reading from the Gospel of John. And, in each of the three years, the reading chosen is an echo of the Epiphany we celebrated last Sunday—that is, another way in which hear of Jesus being revealed—in this case, Him being revealed to John the Baptist and his disciples.

In the early part of Advent, as we began our preparations for the coming of Christ as a Baby at Christmas, we also heard from John the Baptist. He was the one “crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’”¹ Now that we're on the other side of Christmas, it's fitting that we transition back to Ordinary Time by hearing of the moment in which John's prophecy is fulfilled. That is, the moment that Jesus—no longer a Baby—emerges from His hidden life in Nazareth.

As Jesus began revealing Himself, it would take more time for the understanding of who He is and what He came to do to be unfolded to the world through His ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing. And, even after His Ascension to Heaven, the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continues to look back on Jesus' life to gain deeper understanding. But as we look back at

this moment of revelation to John the Baptist, we see that there is so much already contained and revealed in just a few verses. We heard John reveal:

That Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world: a foreshadowing of His Sacrifice that He would make for us on the Cross.
That Jesus existed before him: a witness to Jesus' divinity, and that all creation was made through Him.
And, that the Holy Spirit remained on Him, He who is the Son of God: a witness to God being a Holy Trinity of three Persons.

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Recalling those Readings we heard in the early part of Advent, we are reminded that we weren't only preparing for Jesus to come into our world as a Baby at Christmas. We were then and we are always preparing for Jesus to come again at the end of time. When all people will see Him.

But in the meantime, we learn how Jesus chooses to reveal Himself until He comes again. That is, individually, one by one, and to groups at a time:

To the shepherds on the Holy Night of His Birth
To the Wise Men who traveled from so far to do Him homage and bring Him gifts
At His Baptism, when the Heavens opened up and all those present heard the Voice of the Father.
In today's Gospel, when John sees Jesus coming towards him
And in the coming weeks, we'll hear Jesus continue to call His first disciples and be revealed to many different towns and people through His acts of preaching, teaching, and healing.

When we take all this in and meditate upon it, we realize that Jesus is *not* someone who only came a long time ago and will never come again. He is not someone who was revealed a long time ago and no longer needs to be revealed. Jesus is alive and He will come again! Jesus is alive, and He's still coming to us and being revealed today!

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The Second Reading demonstrates this, as Saint Paul witnesses to his call from Jesus. Paul, once known as Saul, was a leading persecutor of Christians in the time *after* Jesus'

Ascension. Even though Jesus had already ascended to Heaven, He still revealed Himself personally and individually to Saul, and called him to a new way of life. A life of holiness, which means being set apart for God.² As Paul testifies in his First Letter to the Corinthians, not just he, but all of us “who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus [are] called to be holy”—even those of us hearing this today.³

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As we *participate* in this liturgy today and every time we come to Mass (mindful of the word *participate*), we have to be careful that we don’t settle into our pews as though we’re watching and observing something. Hearing old stories about people and events from long ago.

The Readings we hear, the prayers we pray, the hymns we sing, the Sacrament we receive, this gathering of fellow disciples—all of these show us who God *is*. *Not* who God *was*. These show us how God acts and operates in our world. *Not* how He *used* to act and operate in our world.⁴

This means that all the ways He appeared to, revealed Himself to, and called individuals while He walked in our world, are all the ways that He’s *still* appearing, revealing Himself, and calling us to follow Him today.

Have you noticed Jesus revealing Himself to you recently? Or, can you recall a time in the past? It’s good to remember those times and use them as inspiration today. It’s good to pay attention to any recent revelations, and not allow them to slip by forgotten. It’s good to spend some time—particularly while here at Mass—listening to hear how Jesus is calling you.

By virtue of your Baptism—as well as those who are discerning or preparing for Baptism—you are the same as the people we heard about in today’s Readings.⁵ You are the same as Isaiah—called to serve God.⁶ You are the same as Paul—called to be holy.⁷ You are

the same as John the Baptist—called to witness to Jesus and point out to the world when you notice His Presence.⁸

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Maybe you've made a New Year's resolution, to take another step in your faith? Now is a good time to ask Jesus to help you with that! We have many ways to help you with that here at MQP. Our *Inside MQP Christmas Magazine* is full of testimony from fellow parishioners.⁹ Maybe something will resonate with you?

We have Children's and Youth Ministries contact cards in the pews. Please fill one out, and someone from the parish staff will contact you with information about how to help your family connect with faith formation resources.¹⁰ Next weekend is Marian Festival. This is one of the primary celebrations for our whole parish, in honor of our Patroness. Come and pray and allow Mary to reveal her Son to you. In March, we'll have a two-night Lenten Mission, in which we'll be learning about and discerning how to witness to Jesus in the world.

The Lord Jesus is revealing Himself to you today, in this very moment. Calling you to love, serve, and be holy. How will you respond?¹¹

¹ Matthew 3:3

² Galatians 1:11-24

³ 1 Corinthians 1:2

⁴ Adrien Nocent, OSB, from "God's Choice Today" in *The Liturgical Year: Volume Three: Sundays Two to Thirty-Four in Ordinary Time* (tr. By Matthew J. O'Connell) (2013) (p. 68):

"All that we have been reading and saying does not refer solely to the past. On the contrary, it applies very much to the here and now and provides an occasion for us to try to understand better the teaching and spirituality of the liturgy generally. The liturgy is interested not in concepts but in concrete Christian life; it shows what it means to be chosen by God and what mission the choice involves. Nor is the liturgy interested in any abstract theology of God's choice; it intends, rather, to show us the God who chooses."

⁵ Nocent:

"All this is relevant to us. We do not need theories about God's choice. We know for a fact that through our baptism we were chosen by God. Indeed, the name given in antiquity to those preparing for baptism was 'the elect, the chosen.' What they were elected to and chosen for was to share in God's life and to accept the consequences of that sharing. We must accept those consequences in our own lives."

⁶ Isaiah 49:3

⁷ 1 Corinthians 1:2

⁸ John 1:29, 34

⁹ <https://customer-data-prod-bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/organization-uploads/0018000000Qx8MrAAJ/publications/1672772528679-REVISEDMaryQueenofPeaceSammamishWADecember252022reduced.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://mqpchildrenand youth.breezechms.com/form/edfa83>

¹¹ John 1:12a