

Baptism of the Lord

January 13, 2019

Some of you have had the experience of bringing a new puppy home. It's always a lot of fun but also there are many adjustments that need to be made. Often at night the puppy starts to cry and whine. It wants to be with everybody else. It wants to belong. If you bring it to bed with you it will be content but then you will have a life time of a big dog in your bed. Even when it's older, especially if it's a lab, it will plop itself right in the center of the kitchen or wherever you are going to walk so that you have to step over the dog. It wants to be in the center of things.

How much more with a little baby. When a child is born in the family it cries until someone holds it. A baby needs to be loved, it needs to belong, it needs security, it needs a home and a loving family.

There sometimes comes a moment when the child, usually in the teenage years, or even the mother or the dad, will want to get out of the house. To any of the youth here who might think that way, I suggest you talk to Jayme Closs. Her kidnapping was horrific. Mercifully, now she comes home. But her mother and dad have been killed. She returns to a lot of loving relatives and friends. She needs to belong, to be a part of a family.

That is what baptism is all about. Baptism is belonging to the family of God. I want to be in the center of it all. When the Gospel tells about Jesus going out to pray I wonder what it must've been like. I am like that puppy crying in the night. I want to be in the center of God. Especially in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed. There they were. The Holy Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit engaged in the most intense interaction in the history of all time and creation.

Just like the puppy, I have no clue as to what is really going on in the Trinity but there is where I want to be. I need to belong, to be a part of God, and then everything else will be okay.

Families are always messy. We get in each other's hair. There is sibling rivalry, exasperation and frustration about dreams and expectations. But when all is said and

done it is there in the center that I need and want to be. That is what baptism is all about. It is belonging to the family of God.

A lot of people think that being a Christian means being a well behaved person, generous and kind. Many people think that Christianity is just an ethic. In fact, any atheist or pagan can be a good person. What sets Christianity apart is that even if you are not a good person, you still are accepted and loved in the family of God.

Of course, it follows that if you are a member of the family of God, then your life should show it by acts of kindness and mercy and love. But that is only secondary to the fact that no matter what you do, you belong to God. That is what baptism is all about.

When we hear the words in the Gospel today, “You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased,” these words, by extension, are given to you. You are baptized into the family of God. You are at the center of the life of God. Because of this rejoice with all your heart because God is with you and you are with God.