

Christmas Feast of the Lord's Baptism -B-

Isaiah 55:1-11. Responsorial Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6. 1 John 5:1-9. Mark 1:7-11

Gathering hymn: [River of Glory](#) (Dan Schutte); Presentation of Gifts hymn: [By the Waking of our Hearts](#) (Rev. Ricky Manalo)

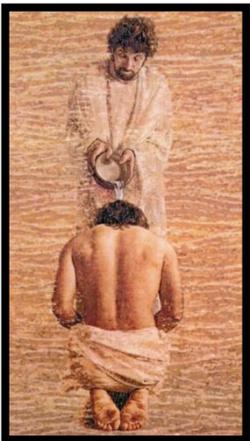
Homily – Fr. Ed Hislop - January 10, 2021

The wonder and mystery, the joy, and hope of the Christmas feast, which we conclude today, seems to have been overwhelmed by the violence and terror wrought on our nation's capital and on all of us, on the ancient feast of the Lord's Manifestation, Epiphany, January 6 this past week.

We and the whole Church have just announced with joy and hope the *truth* that light always overcomes darkness, that God lives and breathes in our flesh and blood even through the thick clouds that cover the earth. Light, we announced, always, always breaks through.

But now we cannot help but wonder if the feast of Christmas we celebrate makes any difference in the heart and soul of the human family; how, we wonder, can hatred, lies, violence, destruction, and fear so readily be enacted, even by some who claim to follow Christ during this Christmas season.

The truth of God's dwelling in the flesh and blood of the human family, can be forgotten when lies, told over and over again, become embraced as truth and truth itself is believed only as a lie. Then the truth of Christmas is lost or forgotten in those lies of hatred, separation, and the terror of violence. The thick clouds of that darkness can be overwhelming, discouraging and frightening, as we sink deeper and deeper into the muddy bottom of the river.



But today, in these dark days, we were touched again with the fresh waters of healing coming from the "river of glory." Refreshed during troubling days, lifted up from the muddy bottom, washed in truth, cleansed with hope remembering, even now, that we were, as we sang, "born from the darkness and clothed in the light!" "Darkness is banished, night turned away, Christ is our sunlight and leading our way."

That is the truth we choose to follow; the truth we tell and the truth we seek. Truth, not found in the muddy bottom or in darkness, but only in light, revealing every lie ever told and every lie ever believed.

From the darkness, deep in the river into which, like Christ, we are plunged again and again (as we have all been this last week), we too "come up out of the water" and see with new eyes and hear with new ears, God speak, not then but now, not yesterday but today, a voice echoing through all the hatred, lies and violence.

Words spoken to us only a moment ago, "striking," as we live through this past week: *Come to me that you may have life.... **You** shall summon a nation you knew not. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let scoundrels forsake their ways and the wicked their thoughts. Turn to the Lord for mercy. Your thoughts are not my thoughts, nor are your ways my ways. My word shall not return to me void. Even the mud will become fertile and fruitful!*

In a moment, as we offer our gifts, and ourselves, at the Lord's Table, we will sing these words with our offering; words, it seems were written for this very day: *"By the waking of our hearts, by the stirring of our souls, may the Spirit of God abide and bring us together in Christ. Bend the stubborn heart and will, melt the frozen, warm the chill; Come guide our searching minds toward your promise fulfilled."*

The prayer of Pope Francis speaks gently: *Our infinite sadness can only be cured by infinite love.*

In that belief, hope, and truth, the newborn savior is made manifest today.

We all need to come up out of the rivers muddy bottom and rise up into the light of truth and listen, listen to the voice of God.

