

Sunday 1-13-13, Year C

Baptism of the Lord

“Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain, . . .

Love has come again, like wheat that riseth green.”

You may recall these lines from the longer hymn that we sing at the cemetery in our commemoration of deceased community members on All Souls’ day.

Baptism, especially in the form of immersion of the head or more, is a symbol of dying, dying to sin and rising to a new way of life. . . Jesus needed no forgiveness, but his baptism was the occasion of God the Father’s blessing, as we heard, “You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased.”

So began Jesus’ ministry, his preaching, choosing of Apostles, working of miracles, until he became too difficult for the administration, was crucified, died and rose again to new and risen life.

I would expect that most of us here were baptized as infants.

Some years ago I had the privilege of being the leader in a parish Christian Initiation program for adults. Preparation for Baptism and Confirmation took about a year, weekly meetings of prayer, instruction in doctrine and sharing on the life of faith, and all aspects of Catholic life. All this reached its climax in the Initiation through receiving the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation during the Easter Vigil, the great celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord. All that made for a heartening if lengthy activity.

Baptism and Confirmation call us all to a life of Christian responsibility, of a life of charity. There are many answers to the question of just how that is done, can be done. Recent events raise the issue of weapons readily available to deranged individuals. The practice of charity, not only giving but also loving, has many degrees and dimensions.

Sincere and active participation in the liturgy enables us all to go deeper in our Christian lives, our charitable lives. As we remember and celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, let us, remembering them or not, celebrate our own baptisms, and recommit ourselves to live as children of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, and heirs of heaven!

Fr. Hilary Hayden