



Family Mass Newsletter

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Far too much of religion has been about deciding where God is and who is beloved. In reality, we have no choice in the matter. All are beloved. We are all members of the Body of Christ, made in God's image, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, whether or not we are aware of this gift. Once we see God's image in one place, the circle keeps widening. It doesn't stop with human beings or even enemies and the least of our brothers and sisters. It moves to frogs and pansies and weeds. Everything becomes enchanting with true sight. We cannot not live in the presence of God. We are totally surrounded and infused by God. All we can do is allow, trust, and finally rest in it, which is indeed why we are "saved" by faith—faith that this could actually be true.

—Richard Rohr



SUNDAY MESSAGE

Today as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, we think about our God's presence among and between and within us. We hear a story, *Come On, Rain!* written by Karen Hesse and illustrated by Jon Muth, which tells of a long-awaited rainstorm that refreshes a community in body and spirit.

Thanks to our creative team—Cynthia Bailey Manns for bringing us the story of a rain that made everyone new; Leif and Mikko Newman for sharing their prayers; Steve Kremer for leading our song; and Richard Dodson for reading and crafting our video.



GET INVOLVED IN THE NEW YEAR!

Did you know that each week we have prayers of the people offered by children from our community? We'd love to hear your child's prayer!

You would record your child's voice into a phone, using our Family Mass format: "My name is... Let us pray that/for... We pray to God." Then send the voice recording to Gabrielle (gdane@stjoan.com). Thanks!

"CONSUMED WITH GRACE"

In this poem, Catherine of Siena, the mystic, activist, and author, describes God's incomprehensible love for us all.

*I first saw God
when I was a child,
six years of age.*

*The cheeks of the sun
were pale before Him,
and the earth
acted as a shy girl, like me.*

*Divine light
entered my heart from His love
that did never fully wane,*

*though indeed,
I can understand
how a person's faith
can at times flicker,*

*for what is the mind to do
with something that
becomes the mind's ruin:
a God that consumes us
in His Grace.*

*I have seen
what you want;
it is there,*

*a Beloved of infinite
tenderness.*

—Catherine of Siena

HELP FOR FAMILIES IN THESE TIMES

The SJA Mental Health ministry will be offering a series of presentations about healthy parenting in our difficult times.

Please join us via zoom as Michael Borowiak, MSW, LICSW and Callie Albaugh MA, LAMFT, Traverse Counseling & Consulting, present a series dedicated to helping families navigate the challenges of COVID-19.

All presentations are Wednesdays from 6:30-7:45 pm on these dates:

- ❖ **January 27:**
Parenting Your Anxious/Depressed Kids in a COVID World
- ❖ **February 3:**
Grief, Loss, and Family Resilience During the COVID Era
- ❖ **February 10:**
What If Your Kid Says No: Practical Tips for How to Manage Resistance and Defiance During COVID Times
- ❖ **February 17:**
Help! Technology Is Taking Control: Strategies for Leading Young People in Healthy Relationships with Technology

All are welcome to these free events. Registration info will follow. For questions, contact Sherri Stella ([sstella@stjoan.com](mailto:ssstella@stjoan.com)).



Here's to a blessed New Year!

We Welcome You Wherever You Are On Your Journey



Family Mass Good News



Then a voice from heaven said,
"You are my beloved Son;
I am very pleased with you."
- Mark 1: 7-11



THE WORD

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. In our first reading (Isaiah 42: 1, 6-7), we hear about a servant, chosen by God to bring justice to all people. This servant will fulfill God's promise to bring light to those living in darkness.

In the Gospel (Mark 1: 7-11), we have the story of Jesus' baptism by John. Imagine the scene: John, who has said that he is not even worthy to untie Jesus' sandals, agrees to baptize Jesus. Like others before him, Jesus steps into the River Jordan. It's when he rises from the water that things get interesting. The sky seems to part and the Spirit of God comes down in the form of a dove and claims Jesus as God's own.

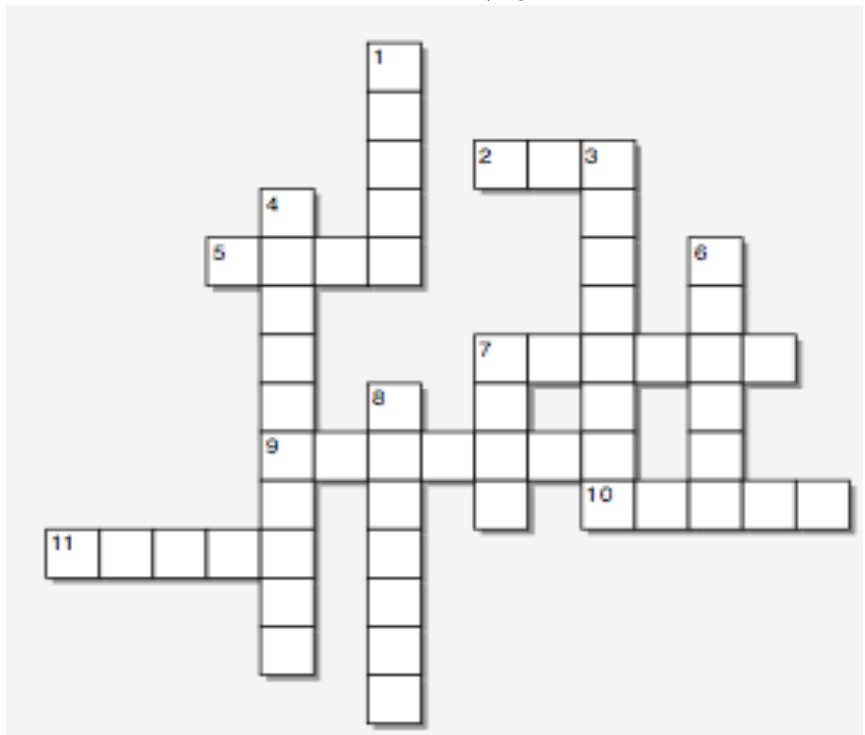
When the voice from heaven says, "This is my beloved Son," we see that Jesus is the chosen servant foretold by Isaiah, sent by God to bring justice and light to all people. His baptism anoints Jesus to begin his public ministry. He will bring fairness, healing, and the power of God's love to the world.

THE WATER OF LIFE

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord, when God claims Jesus as beloved child, reminds us of God's infinite love for all of us. In Baptism, we are named children of God and welcomed by people who promise to walk alongside us in our spiritual journey. We are claimed by God and by our faith community as beloved. In our story, a beloved community is washed by water from the sky that makes everything new. This could be a description of baptism, the water of life that renews us as a community in God's love.

PUZZLER

Find the clues on page three...



ACROSS

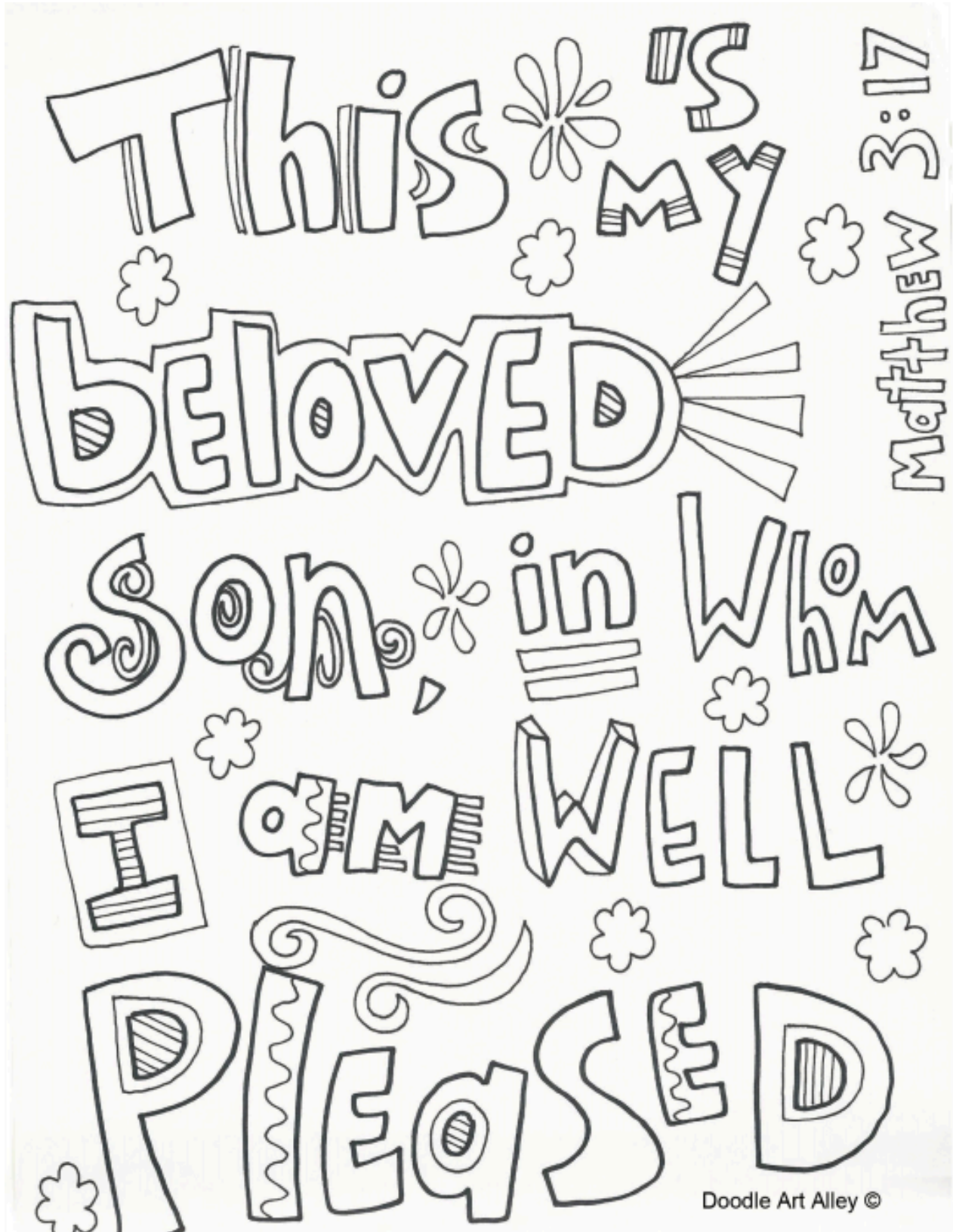
2. God said, "You are my beloved _____"
5. Bird that represents peace
7. River where Jesus was baptized
9. One who speaks for God
10. Bees make this
11. Liquid used to baptize

DOWN

1. What was heard when Jesus was baptized
3. Jesus' hometown
4. "He will baptize you in the _____"
6. A voice came from _____
7. Man who baptized Jesus
8. To pardon



Family Mass Good News



You are a beloved Child of God!

[puzzle clues: water, Nazareth, prophet, voice, dove, John, Jordan, Holy Spirit, son, heaven, forgive, honey]