

## SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

January 20, 2008

*Isaiah 49: 3, 5 - 6; 1 Corinthians 1: 1 - 3; John 1: 29 - 34*  
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The readings for today's Eucharist are filled with references/reminders of Baptism. Following on last weeks's celebration of the Baptism of Jesus, today can be a wonderful reminder of the on-going effects and challenges of our own baptism.

The Lord's Baptism marks the end of the Christmas season and the return to what the Church refers to as ordinary time. "Ordinary" is perhaps misleading; we must not allow the word to suggest that this time is to be seen and lived as a simple time when very little is happening in our spiritual life.

In one sense this ordinary time is what all of the extraordinary seasons and feasts in the Church's year prepare us for. It is now our turn to live what we have witnessed in Advent and Christmas. In early summer it will be our time to live what Lent, Easter and Pentecost have taught us.

For us the basis of all these lessons is our baptism, the sacrament of new life that sends us forth throughout our lives to share with others the gift of new life we have received.

At our baptism we received a lighted candle as sign of our unity with Christ the light and of our call to be for our world and the people we daily encounter a light of truth and compassion, love and integrity. In today's first reading the call to be light was given to the mysterious figure of the Suffering Servant. The Church, in turn, would apply that image to Christ, who would then call us to be a light for the world.

St. Paul opens his first letter to the Corinthians by reminding them that they have been consecrated in Christ Jesus and called to be holy people. Baptism marks our consecration and makes of us a holy people in our time. We are this people and are ever challenged to deepen this reality within us.

In the gospel passage, John reminds us of last week's celebration of the Lord's Baptism and points to the promise of the baptism that Jesus has come to give, the baptism that we have all received; this baptism is our giftedness in the Spirit. This baptism has taught and teaches us what our life means, strengthens us to carry out that truth, and continues to purify us that we become Christ in and for our world.

There is nothing ordinary about this; may we have the wisdom and energy to step into these days in freedom and joy,