

January 13, 2008
Sunday of the First Week of Ordinary Time
The Baptism of the Lord

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Psalms 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

Acts 10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

This line from the gospel of Matthew makes a perfect mantra for this Ordinary Time we enter into today. I think that we forget that we too are God's Beloved. Henri Nouwen spent most of his life writing so that we would not forget, so that we would come to know our 'beloved ness' rooted in God. I grew up in the time when the emphasis was on 'being good' rather than on being loved. Sin was something we need to avoid, and something from which we needed to be cleansed. Much of the focus of that era was on growing to perfection, becoming pleasing to God. I did not escape that indoctrination, but I was not immersed in it. I spent my early years in a convent school with a religious order that believed that we are God's Beloved. The seeds of life in community were planted in all of us through our experiences as students and family in that school. I do not remember ever hearing this scripture passage while I was there, these were the years we were not encouraged to read the Bible. But I do remember feeling very loved by God. This line from Matthew's gospel was not a surprise to me. Yet, even though the seeds of being loved by God were planted deep during those, life tends to send other messages. The world tells us that we need to be accomplished and popular to be good enough to be valuable. That message harms us all. It is time to immerse our selves in the words of Matthew. It is time to reflect on the love God has for each of us. It is time to sit silently and repeat these words until they are so much a part of us that we cannot believe otherwise.

God loves us not because of who we are, but because of who He is.

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