

Mark 1:4-11, Gen 1:1-5 Jan 10,2021

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus.

**The Best Most Exotic Marigold Hotel
for the elderly and beautiful**

is a wonderful colourful movie
about British retirees
who travel to India to take up residence
in what they believe
is a newly restored hotel
which turns out to be
less luxurious than advertised.

If you love Maggie Smith and Judy Dench,
if you enjoy travel
and experiencing something new,
THIS IS THE MOVIE FOR YOU!
It captures the dynamics of change,
A new lease on life.

WE HAVE BEGUN A NEW YEAR.
We may be reflecting on the past,
as well as looking ahead to 2021.
And what a year we have had.

Have you ever had one of those days
when you wanted a do-over?
A day when you wanted
to take a mulligan and start again?

I remember a guy telling me, one time,
**“You know, I’ve had a bad decade.
There are so many things
I wish I could go back and do differently”.**

Whether it is a day, a year or a decade
there are times when we wish
we could back up and do things differently.

- *Choose different words to speak.
- *Act in a different way.
- *Handle a relationship better.
- *Sometimes we just want to do life differently.

I think the wishing goes deeper
than just doing differently.
**Sometimes more than anything
we want to be different.**

Our doing, our actions
reveals who we are,
how we see ourselves,
one another, and the world.

Being and doing are intimately connected.
Wishing we could do things differently,
and the deeper wish
to be a different creation,
is really the wish for **the first day**.

Think about some of your **first days**.

*The first day you went to school.

*The first day as a parent.

*The first day of that job
you had been waiting for and working toward.

*The first day you took seriously
(as a matter of life and death) **your faith**.

First days are filled with light.

They hold the promise of all that might be.

There is an excitement, newness
and innocence to first days.

No harsh words had been spoken.
No feelings had been hurt.
No relationships had been broken.
There was no guilt or regret.

**There was only light:
the light of life, the light of love,
the light of promise and hope;
the light of God.**

The first days are vibrant, alive,
full of dreams and possibilities.

I imagine that is how God
looked at Creation,
the first day in the beginning.

And it was good.

The first day is always a day of creation.

If you are looking for change in your life -
sometimes we think:

**“O I wish I could go back and whatever
—do it differently, start again,
looking for the first day.”**

We cannot go back to the way it was.

The first day wishing, however,
is not really about turning back time.
It is about becoming a new creation,
a new being.

**That is in essence of what
gives meaning to our baptism.**

I don't remember my baptism,
I was just a baby
but I have seen pictures
of my parents standing
with my god-parents around the font
only the family present.
Private baptisms were common in those days.

I never thought much about that day
until I became involved in the church
attending Sunday School and in the AYPA,
then the choir and studying for the priesthood.

All in all, however,
it was not my clear focus,
I must admit that.!
I lacked clarity.

My journey through life
has had it's ups and downs.

There were and are times of struggle
and times of wonder and delight.
Life is like that.

**But when I think of my baptism now,
I believe ultimately,
it is about returning
to the waters of Jesus' baptisms.**

Every time we return
to the baptismal waters,
we return to **the first day.**

**Creation and baptism
cannot be separated.**
They are intimately connected
and mirror each other.

Listen to what Genesis says
and how Mark describes Jesus' baptism.

**In Genesis creation we read:
In the beginning a wind
(or breath, or spirit) of God
swept over the face of the waters.**

**In Mark we read:
At Jesus' baptism the spirit
(or breath or wind) of God
descended on Jesus as he is
coming up out of the water.**

**In Genesis creation:
In the beginning God said,
"Let there be light"**

**In Mark:
At Jesus' baptism God said,
"You are my Son, the Beloved."**

**In Genesis creation:
In the beginning
"God saw that the light was good".**

**In Mark: At Jesus' baptism
"God was well pleased".**

Creation and Jesus baptism
are God's gift to humanity.
Everything God does
God does for humanity.

**Jesus did not need to be baptized.
We needed him to be baptized.**

The baptismal water did not sanctify Jesus;
he sanctified the baptismal water.

His baptism is not the means
by which we identify with him,
but the means by which
he identifies with us.

Our baptism allows us
to participate in his baptism.

Our humanity was recreated
in Jesus' baptism.

For us It is the first day.

In baptism we are
a new creation, a new being.

*Every time we return to the baptismal waters
we claim our identity in Jesus
as beloved sons and daughters.

*Every time we return to the baptism waters
God again manifests
and reveals himself in humanity.

*Every time we return to the baptismal waters
we return to that first day
of light, love, life
and the promise of all that might be.

Whatever your life has been
or might now be,
the baptismal waters await you.

**In Baptism God has done for us
what we cannot do for ourselves.
We are a New Creation through Jesus Christ.**

So when you do think of your baptism,
remember in Christ we are all new creations.
We have been changed
and recreated by Baptism.

When I reflect on the film,
“The Best Most Exotic Marigold Hotel”,
I witness the transition and growth
of a group of elderly
and beautiful individuals
who experience incredible change.
They are learning to own
who they are
exploring their weakness
and finding their strength
to accept change in their lives.

We too can experience the same
by returning to the waters of Baptism
to **own our true identity -**
as God’s sons and daughters.

We are loved and recreated
through water and the Spirit. Amen.