

# Fr. Jeff's Weekly Homily

## Baptism of the Lord January 13, 2008

### **READING 1: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7**

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you

### **Psalm 29**

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

### **READING 2: Acts 10:34-38**

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.

### **GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17**

John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?"

Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord marks the end of the Church's celebration of Christmas. I was putting the Christmas decorations away this week while I was thinking about this Gospel. Let me show you this gift. My parents gave this Manger Scene to me about 12 years ago. I take this gift out of the closet and put it out every Christmas. Of course, this gift will be put away until next year. Now, did any of the children bring one of their Christmas gifts with them today? I've noticed that many of the children brought new dolls or toys to church last week. Good, thank you, Robbie. What is this gift? Did it come in a box? Was it wrapped up in nice paper? Yes, most of our gifts come that way. But this is a gift you play with all the time, right? So, you don't put it back into the box it came in do you? This gift is made to be played with everyday; so you would not keep it in the box.

Now, let's consider the most important gift that we received at Christmas. God's gift to us was His Son, a baby wrapped in blankets and laid in a manger. Is that gift like this one (manger scene)? Would you put him in a box and keep for next Christmas? Or is the gift of Jesus like Robbie's toy; One that will be used every day?

In today's Gospel, John is doing God's work, baptizing the people. But when Jesus

comes for Baptism, John backs off. He tells Jesus it should be the other way, Jesus should baptize John. He tried to box Jesus into his own notion of the Messiah. Do we do that? Do we box the great liberator in our own notions of what he should do? Do we try to keep Jesus in a box to take out only when we want to use him? Or is every day game day for Jesus?

Any time we tell Jesus we will live like he wants us to live...later...we are putting him in a box. Today when Jesus told John we must do what God asks us to do, John agreed. Imagine: John agreed. Could we write our names in that sentence? Jeff agreed. Pat agreed. Tim agreed. Delaney agreed?

We are not meant to keep Jesus in a box of our own creation to be stored away and used occasionally. When we were baptized in His Name, He became a part of our daily life. That is good news!

*Fr. Jeff McGowan  
Queen of Peace Catholic Community  
Gainesville, Florida*