



Photo by Ralph Barzditis, Citizen Advertiser

Auburn Pastor Honored

Father Felix Bracikowski, OFM Conv., tries out the bicycle given to him at a party celebrating the 35th anniversary of his ordination. At left is John Rogalski, chairman of the party at the Polish Falcons Club in Auburn. Father Bracikowski, pastor of St. Hyacinth's since 1966, was ordained in Italy in 1938.



WORD FOR SUNDAY — Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) Is. 42:1-4, 6-7. (R2) Acts 10:34-38. (R3) Lk. 3:15-16; 21-22.

When Jesus was baptized, it was His first public appearance. His next such manifestation was at Cana of Galilee. That is why this Sunday and next, the Church in her liturgy situates these events right after the visit of the Magi, even though they occurred in fact some thirty years later. The visit of the Magi, the Baptism of Jesus and the miracle at Cana — all were part of Jesus' epiphany or manifestation to the world.

The Baptism of Jesus was a proclamation, a revelation, and an inauguration.

It was a **proclamation**, for at His baptism, the voice of God the Father proclaimed who Jesus really was: "You are My beloved Son." This expression echoes Psalm 2:7, where the Messiah is spoken of as a divine King. "The Lord said to my Lord (Jesus), 'You are my Son — this day I have begotten You.'"

His baptism was a **revelation**, for at His baptism the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove and the voice of God the Father went on to say, "My favor rests on Him." These words reflected the prophecy of Second Isaiah in the First Reading and revealed that Jesus was this servant of God spoken of by Isaiah. And because Isaiah spoke of this Servant as one who would suffer much, St. Matthew's use of this expression at Christ's baptism further revealed that Jesus would be not only a divine King, but also a suffering King. To fulfill this difficult role was why the Holy Spirit was given Him.

Finally, the Baptism of Jesus was an **inauguration**. It was the official beginning of His mission to open the heavens — the skies opened. At creation the Spirit of

God brooded over the waters and brought cosmos out of chaos, order out of disorder. By sin, chaos returned to the world. A new creation was needed. So the Spirit of God once more hovered over water — the waters of the Jordan — to help the Son of God in His work of recreation.

By submitting to a baptism for the repentance of sins, Jesus identified Himself with all sinners. And He took away the sins of the world by submitting to another baptism — His baptism of blood.

Jesus' baptism teaches what Christian baptism truly is.

It too is a proclamation — that we are sons of God. It too is a revelation — that we must live as sons of God. We must, in a word, live as Jesus did — for others, to save others no matter the cost. Let us think this too hard, the Spirit of God is given us.

How beautifully Isaiah put it: "I, the Lord, have called you. I have grasped you by the hand. I formed you." In other words, all this is **His doing**. Our doing is to let what He has begun be done. He has lit us to be "a light for the nations." Our job is to let the light shine, to let others see our goodness. Our meekness — not crying out, not shouting at others. Our understanding — not kicking people around, breaking bruised reeds, snuffing out smoldering wicks. Our charity — embracing all men, showing no partiality, seeing persons as people, not as things.

Thus we shall open the heavens to others. As Gandhi put it, "If all Christians were more like your Christ, then all men would be Christians."

Finally, Baptism is an inauguration of this mission for others. Have we begun?

Klein Selected to National Group

John Klein, acting executive director of the Rochester Catholic Youth Organization, has been selected to serve on the 17-member National CYO Athletic Committee.

The committee will meet in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 19, to discuss how to extend the CYO Coaches' Certification Program into dioceses not currently using it, whether a full-time National CYO Athletic Director should be

appointed and what his role would be, and what kind of a presentation the athletic committee should make at the 1974 National Conference on Catholic Youth Work to be held in Miami in October.

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