

Reflection: A New Christmas Tradition

By Sarah Dixon Young

At Christmas time, we do things differently. The house is decorated differently. We eat different foods. We sing different songs. The ho-hum of the rest of the year fades in the twinkle and sparkle of lights, yet we expect our different traditions to remain the same. It wouldn't be a tradition if it wasn't the exact recipe, the exact decor, the exact group of people, the exact location that it was before. Even in our month of differences, we want it to remain the same, or the season leaves us feeling disappointed with unmet expectations. The truth is that we are



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creatures of habit. Routine makes us comfortable. Tradition is familiar and nostalgic. Jesus came to break us out of our routines. He knew that what is comfortable, familiar, and nostalgic wouldn't be enough to free us from the burden of sin or the devastation of lostness.

The whole Old Testament shows a daily routine that didn't even change much for the holidays. Everyday, the priest was expected to offer sacrifices for sin. The tragic part was that the tradition didn't meet the need. "[The law] can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near," Hebrews tells us. The Old Testament sacrificial system was broken and ineffectual. And the Psalmist told us why: "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings." That was never what God wanted. The Jews got stuck in their routines and

traditions and never even achieved the very thing they were looking for-a relationship with God. Aren't we the same way? Even our Christmas traditions are routines that don't make us happy in the long run but leave us with the empty January dol-drums. Even our Advent celebrations, candlelight services, and nativity scenes don't absolve us of our pride, selfishness, and greed. But at the incarnation, Jesus said something that broke the endless cycle of routine: "Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me...Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." The incarnation is mind-

blowing, routine-breaking, tradition-smashing. It is Word within Word within Word, as Jesus, the Word, quotes His Word from Psalms, as He becomes the Word, fulfilling the Word He later spoke to the Hebrews. "And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, waiting..." Make this Advent a waiting that has never happened before, a time of embracing the single sacrifice for sins, a time of living out the will of God in the body He gave you to

be a living sacrifice, obediently following the One who came to bring what we've all been yearning for: A loving relationship with our Creator God who never desired sacrifice but instead became a sacrifice so that we could draw near. *Sarah Dixon Young uses stories everyday to share the love of Jesus with her family, friends, and neighbors. She lives in Fort Totten, ND with her husband, Paul, and their four children. She is the author of five books, many articles, and more Sunday School lessons than she can count. You can follow her adventures or get in touch at www.SarahDixonYoung.com*

Reflection: “A Voice in the Darkness—John the Baptist”



Pfau

by Fr. Bernard Pfau
I am fascinated with the Biblical character of John the Baptist! He was one of the greatest prophets that ever lived and sometimes considered the bridge between the Old and New Testaments. He compared himself to the Prophet Isaiah as the voice in the wilderness, yet lived at the time of

Christ. John was a cousin of Jesus Christ and was very pronounced in pointing to Christ as the Promised One of Israel. He is one of the best voices for the Advent season, which is meant to call us to repentance and to prepare us for the Birth of the Savior. Let us look more closely at this humble servant of God who gave his life as he called

all of Israel to repentance from their sins. John is identified as the “The Baptist” since he went around baptizing the people who were anticipating the coming of the Messiah. Jesus himself asked to receive baptism from John, even though He was without sin. Jesus presents Himself as the leader of the new generation of

children eager to serve the Lord totally. John baptized with water, but he pointed to Jesus as the one who came to fulfill all prophecies by baptizing with “water and the spirit”. It is this Baptism that Christians receive to remove Original Sin from our souls and declare our obedience to the Risen Christ. John is also identified

as “The Voice” in the darkness. He pointed out Jesus as the “Light” for his own disciples to follow, as he knew his life was to end soon. He emptied himself of any glory and saw his role as a servant rather than as a king or leader. His physical Voice was silenced by his beheading

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CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Guide To Local Houses of Worship

ASSEMBLY OF GOD River of Life 1903 Hwy 20 Devils Lake 701-662-4582 www.riverlife.us Sunday: 10 a.m. worship	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS 20th St. & Lincoln Ave. Devils Lake Sunday: 10 a.m. Sacrament at 11 a.m.	LIGHTHOUSE ASSEMBLY OF GOD Fort Totten, N.D. 701-766-4826 Sunday 10:30 a.m.	ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH 515 Fourth St. Devils Lake 662-7558 Monday -Friday at 12:00pm Tuesday at 10:00am at Odd Fellows Wednesday at 10:00am at Eventide Friday at 9:30am at St. Joseph School Saturday at 8:30am & 5:00pm Sunday at 7:30am, 9:00am & 11:00am	ST. WILLIAMS CATHOLIC CHURCH Maddock, N.D. 438-2668 Wednesday: 7 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Mass. Mass at 5 p.m. on the first Friday of the month.
ASSUMPTION OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH Starkweather, N.D. 292-4301 Sunday: Mass: Rotating 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. with St. Mary's, Munich Call 682-5178 (Munich).	DAKOTA BAPTIST CHURCH West Highway 57 Fort Totten Church - 766-4516 Sunday: 11 a.m. worship.	MORNING STAR PARISH 701-262-4714 www.morningstarparish.com Worship services at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. rotating: American, Pekin, Warwick, Sigdal and Sheyenne Lutheran	ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH St. Michael, ND 58370 766-4151 Sunday Mass: 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.	SEVEN DOLORS CATHOLIC CHURCH Fort Totten 766-4314 Sunday: 11 a.m. Mass. Daily Mass: 7 a.m.
BDECAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Tokio, N.D. (2 miles south of Tokio, near Woodlake) 294-2283 www.bdecanpresbyterian-church.org Worship: at 11 a.m., Sunday school kids K - 5 grade during worship, potluck meal after	DAKOTA OYATE LUTHERAN CHURCH 294-2361 Tokio, N.D. 11 a.m. worship	NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP North Junction of Hwy. 15 & 20 Rural Hamar 262-4470 Sunday: 10:30 a.m. worship service	ST. OLAF LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA 601 6th St. NE Devils Lake, ND 662-4911 9:30 a.m. Worship (September - May) Summer: 8:30 a.m. at Retreat Center 11 a.m. at St. Olaf (June - August)	TRINITY-BERGEN AFLC LUTHERAN CHURCH PO Box 46 Starkweather Sunday - 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion every Sunday
BETHEL EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH 1312 East Walnut St. Devils Lake 662-3758 www.bethelfree.com Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE ADVENT Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue Devils Lake 11 a.m. Morning prayer 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays Holy Eucharist- 4th Sunday	OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA 612 14th Ave. NE Devils Lake, N.D. 662-5112 Sunday: 10 a.m. Service Wednesday: 6 p.m. Service	ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH 7th St. & 7th Ave. 662-2245 Devils Lake Missouri Synod Worship: 11 a.m. Dial-a-Devotion: 662-3158.	WEBSTER CHAPEL Webster, N.D. Worship is at 9 a.m. the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays.
CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC CHURCH Tokio Saturday: 7 p.m. Mass all year round.	FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 601 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake Sunday 9:30 a.m. worship	PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH (NALC) 1700 Fifth Ave. NE PO Box 1041 Devils Lake, N.D. 662-3565 Worship Sunday 9:30 a.m.	ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH Fort Totten, N.D. 11 a.m. Holy Eucharist 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays, 4th Sunday - Morning Prayer	WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 501 Fifth St. NE Devils Lake, 662-3584 Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.
CHURCH OF GOD (SEVENTH DAY) 607 Fifth St. S.E. Devils Lake Saturday: 2 p.m.	GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH 311 5th Ave. NE Devils Lake 701-230-1332 Sunday: 10:30am and 6 p.m.	ST. BONIFACE CATHOLIC CHURCH Esmond, N.D. 249-8360 Tuesday-Saturday: Weekday Mass at 9 a.m. Saturday: 5 p.m. Mass. Sunday: 8:30 a.m. Mass.	ZOAR FREE LUTHERAN Hampden, North Dakota Pastor Craig Wentzel May through August Worship Sundays 9 a.m.	If you would like to make changes or corrections to this ad, please contact Louise at loleson@cmpapers.com
	GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH Lakota Missouri Synod Sunday worship: 9:30 a.m.	ST. JEROME'S CATHOLIC CHURCH Crow Hill District Hwy. #57, One mile N. Saturday: Mass 5 p.m.		
	HIGH PLAINS MINISTRY Nekoma, Lawton, Concordia, and Our Redeemer's			
	LAKOTA LUTHERAN CHURCH LAKOTA, ND 247-2777 Sundays: 10 a.m.			

This week's listing brought to you by the following local businesses:

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-Jerome W wholesale
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314 3rd Ave NE,662-4117

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-Altru Health System
1001 7th St NE,662-2158

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323 5th St NE,662-4024