

Pastors Message Jan. & Feb. 2009

By Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano

BEGINNINGS

January is a month of beginnings.

Most obviously, January 1 is the start of a new year.

Americans periodically inaugurate a new president in January.

Christians celebrate the first event in the public ministry of Jesus, his baptism, every January.

Epiphany, in early January, is the earliest sign in the Gospels that Gentiles are welcome in the community of Christ.

The month of January ends with a week of prayer for Christian Unity, for a rebirth of Christian harmony and solidarity that call for diversity and equality in the family of Christian traditions.

Beginnings are meaningful for people who yearn to be hopeful. A hopeless person dreads the beginning of another day and believes that innovation is doomed from the outset.

The human family and Christianity make it clear that they are on the side of hope. Everyone gets a new year, with encouragement to throw out the old and gain a fresh start. Christians are reminded that they began their lives as acceptable to God, in baptism and in the revelation or epiphany of their worthiness.

It is a time for hope: not only because it is January, but also because we are human. Humanity has hope in its DNA. It is a time for hope: especially because we are Christians. Christianity's first action on behalf of every Christian is baptism. Baptism is what hope looks like when it becomes a sacrament.

It takes effort to become hopeless. The chronology of life, the biography of Jesus, the words of the Gospel, the sacraments of the Church all conspire to inspire hope.

Later in this year the liturgy of the Church will become even more daring. It will remind us that the ashes of sin and the destructiveness of death, even these, do not crush hope. That is, of course, later. For now it is enough to know that January is clustered with hope and that this hope will be expanded as the year progresses.

Anthony