

## Homily for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

I received a telephone call two days after Christmas. It was a friend of mine who said: “You won’t believe this. Stop and Shop is now selling Easter eggs.” I didn’t believe it until I saw it for myself. But what was more unusual was going to a stationery store where they were selling Fourth of July material.

We live in a strange world. Everywhere you go, Christmas decorations are all down and put away...most of them coming down within the week after Christmas. And our commercialistic society is already trying to make hay with upcoming holidays...even those that are months away. Yet here we are **and** Immaculate Conception Parish looks like Christmas Eve. Seems like the parish is out of sync with the rest of the world.

Well...that’s true. We are out of sync. But it isn’t just us. It’s the Gospel that is out of sync. It is out of sync because in our baptism Christ calls us to live differently.

The world says that you should watch out for yourself and make sure you get everything that you deserve. The Gospel says that we should watch out for others first and ourselves last. My God, can you imagine if

we took that seriously and each and every person here looked out for the poor and downtrodden of this state and just took care of one other person? What a revolution that would be.

The world says...someone hurts you...you hurt them back. No matter how small or how big, you get the last word. The Gospel teaches that Jesus said “Father, forgive them...” As He hung dying on the cross He taught us by example what He had said with words...forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness. Imagine if we could forgive each other...and mean it. Imagine if one by one every person we know could make forgiveness the hallmark of his or her life. Maybe we wouldn't end up with so much bloodshed and hatred in the world. We say “I believe in the forgiveness of sins...” Sometimes the problem is that we don't believe that our baptism calls us to **be** the forgivers.

The world says...oh, the world says an endless litany of things. The Gospel says...the litany may be endless, but the response is always the same...that's not what the Gospel teaches.

And so yes, the Gospel is out of sync...it is always out of sync. It should always be out of sync. For in our baptism we are called to live the Gospel. And the Gospel says to us...I want you to be out of sync. I want you to be out of sync with everything in the world so that anyone

who looks at you will know that you are my beloved child in whom I am so well pleased.