

Father Brad Neely
12th Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle C
Spps – Nezperce: June 20, 2010
Zech 12: 10-11, 13:1; Gal 3: 26-29; Lk 9:18-24

Since being ordained a priest,
there is one less decision in the morning.
Should I wear black today, or black?
Gee, I wore black yesterday....
Maybe tomorrow I'll wear black.

There is some amount of controversy these days
about priests wearing clerical wear.
An unwritten rule has settled in
over the last 40 years
that the priest should just *blend in*
by wearing street clothes.
However, it is my experience
that when I put on my clerical collar,
I am reminded of *who I am*.
The collar also lets others know *who I am*.

St. Paul, in our second reading,
reminds all of us *who we are*---
that is ---those who have been baptized into Christ,
have "*clothed* ourselves with Christ."
As Paul says many times in his epistles,
the baptized have "*put on*" Christ.
We *wear* Christ.
What does it mean to *put on*, or *wear* Christ?

There is an adage in the Church:
lex orandi, lex credenda---
how we pray is how we believe...
Paul makes the connection between baptism
and the *wearing* of Christ,
so it is logical to look at the Baptism rite of the Church.
It will tell us, "how we pray is how we believe."
We'll look at the rite for baptizing infants.
*The first part of the rite is to ask the parents,
"What name have you given your child?"
It is a big deal to have a name before God.
Remember that at the time of Christ,
the false gods of the pagans
were to be appeased,
not to be "in relationship" with humanity.
The one true God of Israel
desires a covenantal relationship.
We all have a *name* before Christ.
We are not a *number*, we are a *who* with a *name*.
*The parent's have duties:
-to train their child in the practice of the faith;

-to help them to keep God's commandments as
Christ

taught us, by loving God and our
neighbor.

*We call upon the Community of Saints.
We believe that there is life after death.
The Saints are with us,
and we invite them to the occasion of baptism.
[This includes Sts Peter and Paul].

*The child is welcomed by the priest or deacon
into the Christian community.

*On behalf of the child, we renounce sin,
and profess our faith

*The child, who has a **name**,
is baptized (immersed) by water
in the **name** of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
The blessed water of baptism is a rich symbol
of the grace given in this sacrament.

The water is a wellspring of holiness,
a new beginning of goodness,
a leading out of slavery to sin,
a cleansing,

a new birth of innocence;
a rising out of the waters of death
into newness of life with Christ.

*We receive an anointing (we are sealed)
with the chrism of salvation,
that we may remain forever a member of Christ,
who is Priest, Prophet, and King."

*We "put on" Christ:
the words of the rite say,
"this child has become a new creation,
and [has been] clothed in Christ.

In [their] white garment,
see the outward sign of [their] Christian dignity.
With family and friends to help [them]
by word and example,
bring that dignity unstained
into the everlasting life of heaven."

*We receive the light of Christ:
The rite say: "this light is entrusted
to [the parents and godparents]
to be kept burning brightly. . .
[this child] has been enlightened by Christ,
and is to walk always as a child of the light.
May we keep the flame of faith alive in [their] hearts.
When the Lord comes, may [they] go out to meet him
with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom."

***Wearing* Christ is foundational
to **who we are** in the world.
It should be as evident
as anything physical clothes we may wear.**

So, to recap all the gifts of identity
that we receive in baptism,
within the context of Christ's own life,
we **wear**:

*our personal *name*;

We wear:

*growth in the practice of the faith;

We wear:

*the keeping of God's commandments;

We wear:

*those who have gone before us
leading extraordinary lives of faith;

We wear:

*our welcome into the Christian community;

We wear:

*a renunciation of sin,
and a profession of faith:

We wear:

*our immersion into the waters of cleansing and
holiness;

We wear:

*our anointing, or bonding with Christ,
who is Priest, Prophet, and King.”

We wear:

*the light of Christ;

and we wear:

*the white garment---the clothing of Christ.

This is the wardrobe we are given
for our initial supernatural entry into the divine realm.

We wear this as we travel to the next life.

These layers of clothing,
which form our true identity,
should be held high in our daily consciousness.

It is well worth our time to pray
and contemplate how we carry ourselves in this world
given the gift we receive
of this share in divine life.