

## **Baptism of Jesus... Star Wars**

### **Introduction...**

Over the holidays I enjoyed the new Star Wars movie "The Force Awakens." In the first three weeks of its release it has taken in one billion dollars.

### **I Why the Popularity of Star Wars?**

When I went to see it during its first week of release, most of the people in the sold out theater were 20-somethings. So many young adults seemed attracted to a story about the struggle of good against evil, of darkness against light... the 'dark side' against 'the force' and about the companionship of good people as they struggle against evil. This movie is part one of a three part adventure saga.

The movie praises the virtues of friendship and faithfulness, courage and perseverance, leadership and loyalty, steadfast devotion and bearing with the sufferings of the struggles against evil.

It portrays evil as evil:  
treachery and moral blindness,  
greedy quest for power over others,  
vanity and pride,  
needless violence and the destruction of our nature's beauty.

Hundreds... thousands are flocking to see this movie, among whom are many of our young adults... to at least glimpse lives of bravery and conviction, lives dedicated to a cause larger than self-aggrandizement and easy consumerism...

How our world needs to know that life is something more than enlightened self interest and entertained consumption... more than just buying "stuff" to make us happy.

Refrain...

## **II Jesus, Our Story**

We disciples of Jesus describe our lives as a journey...  
a journey from God to God.

We try to follow the way Jesus has shown us.

For us, Jesus is in truth the very Son of God,  
walking among us,

sent to us by our loving Father.

This is the message of this Christmas Season,  
Beginning with Advent,

blossoming in the beautiful stories of Christmas and Epiphany, and  
concluding with today's Gospel...

the Baptism of Jesus.

Jesus' Baptism is the official beginning of his Public Ministry...

Over the next two months we will learn about Jesus' public ministry... Jesus  
came to heal a broken world.

Creator, loving God will not abandon our broken, at times chaotic, world...

Refrain

## **III Today's Scriptures**

Today's first reading describes Jesus as God's servant,  
God's chosen one,

With whom God was pleased.

Jesus is God among us... showing us the way to the Father.

By his preaching, his healings, his public ministry...

Jesus shows us that God is on our side and wants us to flourish.

Like all of us, Jesus encountered darkness and wickedness,  
He struggled against the sinfulness he encountered,  
And he bore the sufferings of this struggle with courage and patience.  
In the end Jesus would be put to death,  
because of what he preached and what he did,  
because of the sinfulness he encountered.  
But the powers of death...  
the envy and bitterness,  
the betrayal and brutality,  
the darkness and wickedness....  
these could not overcome Jesus.  
And herein lies our hope...  
that Jesus has ultimately brought God's forgiveness to our sinful world,  
and he will help us to deal with the many powers of darkness and sinfulness  
and death that we encounter.  
Jesus will give us the courage and strength we need  
to walk the journey of our lives,  
being the people God wants us to be...  
people who recognize that life is so much more than just being an  
entertained consumer,  
A person being consumed what they consume,  
someone seeking happiness and fulfillment in the kingdom of Stuff.

Refrain...

#### **IV Resolutions**

How might we get very practical about all of this?  
The New Year is a time of Resolutions...  
Perhaps we could make some resolutions...

asking God's help with the darkness and perils of our journey...

Let's give some examples...

For school students... grade school, high school, and even college... Where is the darkness? For what might you pray and ask God's help?

Remember, when we pray we recognize that we are not alone in facing the darkness...

we recognize that our God of Light is with us,  
to help us with the struggles of our journey...  
and our lives are a journey – from God and to God...

So... students – for what shall you pray, and for what can we join you in prayer?

*Let us pray against the darkness and evil of cheating and lying,  
Of bullying and making fun of others,*

*Let us pray for strength to stay away from drugs and alcohol, and easy  
sexual misconduct.*

*Let us pray for strength to live honestly, to care for others, and to help those  
in need.*

*And let us resolve to pray for this each day.*

Adults... for what shall you pray, and for what can we join you in prayer – for we are all companions on the journey...

God would not have us journey alone...

we who are the Body of Christ in this Church today....

So adults, for what shall you pray, and for what shall we join you in prayer?

*Let us pray for husbands and wives that you grow in your love and  
appreciation and respect for each other... and that God give you wisdom in  
raising your family.*

*From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.*

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*For parents and grandparents, that God give you the Light of Wisdom as you confront the struggles of your journeys...*

*For singles, that God bless you with healthy friendships and keep you from self-centeredness...*

*Let us resolve to pray this each day.*

*For workers, that God give you strength to be honest, To give an honest day's work for your pay, and prudence to deal with "difficult" fellow employees...*

*Let us resolve to pray this each day.*

*For elderly, that God strengthen you as you face the challenges of growing older, and help you to see the opportunities available now in your lives to grow closer to God and to care for others;*

*Let us resolve to pray this each day.*

*For all of us as citizens, that God give us concern for our city, our state, our nation and our world.*

*that God help us move beyond complaints and cynicism and to give help where possible,*

*and present our world's needs in prayer to God.*

*Let us resolve to pray this each day.*

Refrain

**Conclusion**

For what in particular do you pray for today?

*From the Desk of Donald Ware, C.P.*

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As you come to this altar in a few moments to receive Jesus, God's light and graciousness, into your heart...

Ask for the help and strength you need on your journey....

Pray for the companions that God has given you for your journey...

And be sure to thank God that God has blessed you so much...

Remember our journey's end...

When every tear will be wiped away,

Where the darkness of sin will be no more,

And where we and our loved ones will rejoice,

Gathered around the God who loves us.

Refrain...