

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time A - Knowing The Lamb of God Today

January 18, 2026

Today, we are entering into the season of Ordinary Time. Here, we are invited to ponder the public ministry of Jesus. And a central focus of this period is to get to know Jesus better. As Jesus begins his ministry, he approaches the Jordan River asking for John the Baptist's baptism of repentance. And John, on seeing Jesus perhaps for the first time, is pointing Jesus out as "the Lamb of God" and yet makes an unexpected statement that does not seem to fit. John claims: "I did not know him." We know that Jesus and John are related. So how can John say he does not know him? Didn't he leap for joy in his mother's womb when they're visited by Mary when Jesus was in her womb? It is unclear what happened, but John claims that: "The one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'" (John 1:33) This means John did not know Jesus by sight. Rather, he knew him by faith. He is doing exactly what the Spirit of God is telling him to do. This puts us all in a similar place as John the Baptist. All of us, in theory, have not seen Jesus by sight. But if we are here today, it is because we know him by faith. John the Baptist stayed faithful to God over the long years of his time in the desert. He stayed faithful to God even when he was confronted by the religious and secular authorities. At some point, Jesus crossed his path, and because John had faith, he knew it was Jesus and what he would be: the sacrificial lamb who takes away the sins of the world as God has planned.

How often in our own lives do we see Jesus cross our path? We find Jesus today in the Gospel, in the Eucharist, and in the Church community. We have many ways of "finding Jesus". Let us make sure that by seeking him in these ways, when Jesus does appear on the horizon, coming to us, that we recognize the presence of Our Lord! When Jesus appears on the shore of the Jordan River, he does so quietly and without fanfare. John recognized him not because of the power or might of Jesus, but because the Spirit descended upon him. This is very much in keeping with the style of Jesus. Pope Leo XIV recently spoke about Jesus' humility, especially after his resurrection. Jesus never impose himself on the faith of his disciples. He does not appear surrounded by hosts of angels, he does not perform spectacular feats, he does not deliver solemn speeches to reveal the secrets of the universe. Pope Leo mentions how Christ is present in the ordinary way of human life. "Every aspect of our domestic and ordinary life is filled with meaning because of Christ... He says... Resurrection does not mean becoming evanescent spirits, but entering into a deeper communion with God and with our brothers and sisters, in a humanity transfigured by love. In the Pasch of Christ, everything can become grace. Even the most ordinary things: eating, working, waiting, taking care of the house, supporting a friend... Every gesture performed in gratitude and communion anticipates the Kingdom of God." -Pope Leo XIV, October 8th, 2025

We know there's no resurrection without the crucifixion. There'll be no resurrection without the "Lamb of God". We say it at Mass each Sunday, and perhaps we aren't familiar with what it means. It has to do with the Exodus event from Jewish history. During the escape from Egypt, the Israelites were to gather in their homes and sacrifice an unblemished lamb, sprinkling its blood over their doorposts. The blood would be the sign for the Angel of Death to pass-over their home. The blood of the lamb "saved" them from death. Because of this, the Passover lamb is a symbol of deliverance. It means that death has passed by, life has been preserved, and freedom received. John's words in the Gospel tell us that Jesus has come to die for us, to save us by his blood. The Baptism of the Christ is as a New Exodus, where Jesus passes through the waters of death ahead of us, leading us to the Eternal Promised Land of Heaven.

In the psalm today (Psalm 40), we sing; "Here I am Lord, I come to do your will". That is what Isaiah is doing as the servant of the Lord to be the light to the nations, that the Lord's salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (Is 49: 5-6). That is what Paul is doing, called to be an Apostle of Christ to gather all those who are called to be saints in every place to call on the name of our Lord Jesus

Christ. (1 Cor. 1: 1-3). That is what John the Baptist is doing, point out to all the Israelites the Lamb of God. And that is what Jesus is doing, to be the Lamb of God doing his Father's will for the salvation of the world (John1: 29-34). We too have been chosen to continue this saving work which Christ began to be part of this mission in the world we live in. At the moment of our baptism the seed of God's life was planted within us. We are to dedicate ourselves to the call of Jesus who went about doing good. But do we do it? To be honest, how many of us are leading lives which are worthy of our baptismal calling? We preach not by words only but by the way we live and by the effort we exert to make the world a better place by our presence. The example we display in our everyday activities like the practice of charity and humility pave the way for Christ in others.

This week, as we contemplate the baptism of Jesus, and how John knew our Lord by faith, we too, like John, can know our Lord by faith, and we can proclaim him to the world, as did John, by a worthy and devout way of life. John perhaps did not know Jesus by sight. He had to know Jesus by faith. We are like John in many ways, and we too have the ability to know Jesus by faith. In fact, there are four clear ways to find Jesus this week:

- Reading the Gospels
- Attending mass and Eucharistic adoration
- Joining the Church community in prayer
- Finding Jesus in the poor and needy.

We are to walk always as children of the light, keeping the flame of faith burning brightly within our hearts. Being a disciple of Christ, the Lamb of God, demands outstanding service. It cost no less than everything. This is the week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As St. Paul reminded the Corinthians of their solidarity with all Christians, we too need to be reminded that we belong to a worldwide communion of Christians, all of whom call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and have been consecrated and called to be holy. No one can say that they can't find Jesus today when one sees this worldwide communion of Christians working, praying and praising God! The issue at stake is faith in the Lamb of God! Faith, what exactly does it mean?