

Sunday Homily
Second Sunday Ordinary Time A
Is 49:3, 5-6; 1Cor 1:1-3; Jn 1:29-34
Deacon Jeff Claar
January 16, 2011

John the Baptist testifies to all present, “Behold the *Lamb of God* who takes away the sin of the world.” What exactly does he mean by “*Lamb of God*?”

Our perspective of a lamb is a small, meek and innocent little animal. Even the fairy tale of Little Bo Peep may come to mind. But our image of the lamb is nothing like the image of a lamb that would be held by John’s audience!

To John’s Jewish audience, the main purpose of the lamb was one of sacrifice; the sacrificial lamb. In the Jewish culture, a lamb was sacrificed by the priest every morning and evening on the altar in the Temple for the atonement of their sins.

The blood of the lamb was sprinkled on their doorways to save their firstborn sons from King Herod’s slaughter of the Innocents. Even today, the flesh of the lamb is eaten at every Jewish Passover to commemorate this renewal of their covenant with God.

The purpose of the lamb in the Jewish culture has always been one of atonement for sin and communion with God through the renewal of their covenant with Him.

So, when John the Baptist testifies that Jesus is the *Lamb of God*, we better believe that he had everyone’s attention! *If Jesus is the Lamb, then this Jesus must be the One!*

This Jesus, who is the Christ, the Anointed One of God was sent by God to be the perfect sacrifice, the one sacrifice to save us all from sin for all eternity. And it is in this one, perfect sacrifice that our hope lies.

We live our lives in hope, but we know that life is not perfect. Along with the very good of a healthy baby, or the happiness of an engaged couple, we must endure the very bad: the personal loss of a family member, or another senseless tragedy in our country.

Yes, life is not perfect. But the one sacrifice of our *Lamb of God* is perfect. And it is through this perfect sacrifice, re-presented for our benefit at this Mass that we have the opportunity to say, “Yes, Lord I believe and I am in communion with you.”

In a few minutes our priest will testify anew, “Behold the *Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world, happy are we who are called to this supper.” Yes indeed, how happy we are! ###