

Link to Liturgy



Feast Day The Baptism of the Lord

Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.



Lessons and Discussions

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“This is my beloved Son...”

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“...with whom I am well pleased”

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“John tried to prevent him [Jesus]...Then he [Saint John the Baptist] allowed him”

Page 13 – The Virtue of Docility [Part II]

“John tried to prevent him [Jesus]...Then he [Saint John the Baptist] allowed him”

Page 16 – The Voice of God

“And a voice came from the heavens”

Sister Lessons:

This packet in conjunction with the following lessons may be used for Baptism preparation for children above the age of reason, or adults who wish to be baptized. This packet may also be used to prepare parents and Godparents of children below the age of reason.

Lesson - Baptism: To Put on Christ

Lesson - Call to Baptism

Lesson - Send. Preach. Believe. Be Baptized

Introit Entrance Antiphon – Roman Missal

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Dilexisti *Ps 45 (44): 8*

VIII

YOU have loved justice and hated in-iq-uity; * there-

fore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of

gladness above your companions.

Alternate options:Hymns

Joy to the World

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Silent Night

Do you Hear what I hear?

Praise Songs

I will Worship

Let the River Flow

Remnant Band

Consume Me

Who are You?

Your Arms

- [52] Warren Carroll; *2000 Years of Christianity*
- [53] Jeremiah 18:5-6
- [54] Romans 10:17
- [55] Romans 10:15
- [56] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 1997
- [57] Galatians 4
- [58] Hebrews 12:5-6
- [59] Isaiah 53:4-5
- [60] Responsory- From the Office of Readings December 22 – Isaiah 49:15; Psalm 27:10
- [61] John 1:14
- [62] John 3:17
- [63] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.G; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 3, Christmas, Book II; page 19
- [64] Mark 2:17
- [65] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.G; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 3, Christmas, Book II; page 21
- [66] Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta
- [67] The Order of the Mass; The Communion Rite (John 1:29)
- [68] Divine Office; Introduction; section i
- [69] Luke 1:28
- [70] Luke 1:42
- [71] Romans 10:14
- [72] Little Chapter; Sunday Common of Compline; Divine Office (Jeremiah 14:9)
- [73] The Order of the Mass; Liturgy of the Word

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Almighty everliving God,
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading – Matthew 3:13-17 – Roman Missal – Cycle A

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Gospel Reading – Mark 1:7-1 – Roman Missal – Cycle B

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
- Glory to you O Lord

And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. Coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open

and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Gospel Reading – Luke 3:15-16, 21-22 – Roman Missal – Cycle C

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

- Glory to you O Lord

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with whom I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings

From a Sermon by Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, bishop

Christ is bathed in light; let us also be bathed in light. Christ is baptized; let us also go down with him, and rise with him.

John is baptizing when Jesus draws near. Perhaps he comes to sanctify his baptizer; certainly he comes to bury sinful humanity in the waters. He comes to sanctify the Jordan for our sake and in readiness for us; he who is spirit and flesh comes to begin a new creation through the Spirit and water.

The Baptist protests; Jesus insists. Then John says: I ought to be baptized by you. He is the lamp in the presence of the sun, the voice in the presence of the Word, the friend in the presence of the Bridegroom, the greatest of all born of woman in the presence of the firstborn of all creation, the one who leapt in his

and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

“The End” Notes

- [1] Abbot Gueranger, O.S.G; *The Liturgical Year*; Vol. 3, Christmas, Book II; page 24
- [2] CCC 535
- [3] CCC 535
- [4] CCC 536
- [5] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [6] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [7] Ephesians 4:4-6
- [8] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [9] CCC 537
- [10] Revelation 21:5
- [11] St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Oratio. 40, 9: PG 36, 369
- [12] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 1997
- [13] John 1:12
- [14] Office of Readings; Thursday (from January 2 to Epiphany)
- [15] CCC 535
- [16] Antiphon; Thursday Compline; Divine Office
- [17] Common of Compline; Divine Office
- [18] ibid
- [19] Matthew 25:21
- [20] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol. 1; 25.3
- [21] Galatians 4:4-7
- [22] Luke 15:19
- [23] Matthew 27:54
- [24] John 12:14
- [25] Luke 1:38
- [26] Act of Contrition
- [27] John 16:7-9
- [28] 1 John 4:18-19
- [29] The Penny Catechism; A Catechism of Christian Doctrine; Section 338
- [30] The Liturgy of the Hours; Antiphon, Friday, Night Prayer
- [31] Matthew 22:37
- [32] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [33] Philippians 2:12
- [34] *People Pleaser*; Korn III: Remember Who You Are
- [35] Genesis 1:26
- [36] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol. 1; 51.1
- [37] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Section 1257
- [38] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*; 71.2
- [39] Blessed Pope John Paul II's Angelus Message, December 15, 1996.
- [40] Saint Maximus the Confessor; Office of Readings (Wednesday – from January 2 to Epiphany)
- [41] Matthew 6:13
- [42] Rite of Baptism; Roman Ritual
- [43] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol. 1; 51.1
- [44] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Glossary; page 889
- [45] Saint Maximus the Confessor; Office of Readings (Wednesday – from January 2 to Epiphany)
- [46] Collect in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [47] Acts 1:8
- [48] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [49] John 13:9
- [50] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [51] Fr. Francis Fernandez; *In Conversation with God*; Vol. 1; 51.1

V

A L-ma * Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérvī- a cæ-li
 porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-
 re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu- ísti, na-tú-ra mi-
 ránte, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri- us ac po-
 sté-ri- us, Gabri- é-lis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-
 tó-rum mi-se-ré- re.

Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made know by the message of an angel may, by His Passion

mother's womb in the presence of him who was adored in the womb, the forerunner and future forerunner in the presence of him who has already come and is to come again. I ought to be baptized by you; we should also add: and for you, for John is to be baptized in blood, washed clean like Peter, not only by the washing of his feet.

Jesus rises from the waters; the world rises with him. The heavens like Paradise with its flaming sword, closed by Adam for himself and his descendants, are rent open. The Spirit descends in bodily form like the dove that so long ago announced the ending of the flood and so gives honor to the body that is one with God.

Today let us do honor to Christ's baptism and celebrate this feast in holiness. Be cleansed entirely and continue to be cleansed. Nothing gives such pleasure to God as the conversion and salvation of men, for whom his every word and every revelation exist. He wants you to become a living force for all mankind, lights shining in the world. You are to be radiant lights as you stand beside Christ, the great light, bathed in the glory of him who is the light of heaven. You are to enjoy more and more the pure and dazzling light of the Trinity, as now you have received – through not in fullness – a ray of its splendor, proceeding from the one God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

Responsory – Office of Readings

Today the heavens opened and the waters of the sea became sweet and fragrant; the earth rejoiced, the mountains and hills exulted.

- because Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan

What has happened that the sea has been put to flight, and the Jordan has turned back upon itself?

- because Christ was baptized by John in the Jordan

Baptism of the Lord – Lesson and Discussion

"This is my beloved Son..."

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord brings to a close the Christmas season in which we meditate on the Son of God resting in the crib. The crib is our heart. During Advent we prepare the crib of our heart to receive the Son of God, during the Christmas

season we rejoice that God has humbled Himself to rest in the crib of our heart. "We ought to have prepared the way of the Lord during the weeks of Advent; and if so, our hearts have conceived him: therefore now our good works must bring him forth, that thus our heavenly Father, seeing not us ourselves, but his own Son Jesus now living within us, may say of each of us, in his mercy, what he heretofore said in very truth of the Incarnate Word: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." [1]

When is the first time we see Jesus as an adult in public?

We first see Jesus when John baptizes Him. "Jesus' public life begins with his baptism by John in the Jordan." [2]

Who were "all the people" who got baptized? All the other people were the sinners who came to repent for their sins. "tax collectors and soldiers, Pharisees and Sadducees, and prostitutes – come to be baptized by him." [3]

Why did Jesus have to be baptized? Jesus did not need to be baptized in order for salvation. He takes part in the baptism as a sign of acceptance to what was to come; his mission as God's suffering Servant. "He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.' Already he is anticipating the 'baptism' of his bloody death. Already he is coming to 'fulfill all righteousness,' that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father's voice responds to the Son's acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to 'rest on him.' Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism 'the heavens were opened' – the heavens that Adam's sin had closed – and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation." [4]

It is only through Baptism that we can understand what it means to be a "son" and have the grace necessary to "please" God. "Certainly he [Jesus] comes to bury sinful humanity in the waters. He comes to sanctify the Jordan for our sake and in readiness for us; he who is spirit and flesh comes to begin a new creation through the Spirit and water." [5]

Why use water for baptisms? Water covers over 95% of this planet. Up to 60% of our body weight is water. Water is an essential part of our existence. God created the waters at the be-

slip of paper. After reading the sentence, they would proceed to lead the group in the first part of the Hail Mary.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

- John is baptizing in the Jordan proclaiming a baptism of repentance.
- "I am the voice of one crying in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord."
- "One mightier than I is coming after me."
- "I have baptized you with water, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
- Seeing Jesus, John exclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God."
- After Jesus' baptism a voice from Heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."
- The Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove.
- In this heavenly manifestation is instituted the sacrament of baptism.
- The divine Trinity is manifested: the voice of the Father is heard as the Spirit descends upon the Son.
- Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater

guardian and interpreter of the Word of God. **Do we keep the Word of God? Do will live out the Gospel?** We can do this by living out the prayer said in Mass, “May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well.”[73]

STORY – A Father and Son

There was once a father and son going to market to get produce for the family’s meal that night. While on the way to the market, the son became restless and wanted to wander and explore in the woods next to the road. The father and son where in a carriage pulled by a single horse so the father agreed to let the son explore the woods as long as he kept near the road and continue to walk in the direction of the market. The father told the son that he would call out his son’s name often and that if the son could not hear his voice or that if the voice was very soft that the son would need to immediately run in the direction of the voice so that he would not get lost. We often want to explore life and not sit at the side of our loving Father, God. Our hope is to one day sit at His side with Christ after our resurrection, but for now, while on this earth our sinful desire is to wander. We must always however listen to the voice of God. What does it mean if we don’t hear the voice of God, or that voice is faint or unclear? This means we have wandered too far in our sin, we have lost sight of the path, of God. We must hear the voice of God again and hear it clearly so that we can orient our life and align it with God.

GAME/VIDEO – Traffic Cone Marco Polo Game - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:10

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-JSrHHNo8I>
Many of us have played the game Marco Polo in a swimming pool; these brothers play it on land with traffic cones. The point of the Game is to listen to the voice of the other playing and then go in that direction. The point of our life is to cry out “Our Father”, to listen to his voice and to go in His direction.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – The First Luminous Mystery (The Baptism of the Lord)

Say One Our Father at the beginning, and one Hail Mary after each sentence, ends with a Glory Be. It would be best to ask 10 volunteers to lead the prayer. Each volunteer would read the sentence, which could be printed out prior and handed to them on a

ginning of creation. When we want to clean our hands we wash them with water. When we want to wash our bodies we take a shower or bath. It’s no wonder that God wanted to use water as an external means to symbolize the washing of our soul.

What is happening at the Baptism of Jesus? What is happening at our Baptism? Jesus, who clothes himself in humanity, takes that sinful humanity into the waters. Sinful humanity is buried in the water but rises a new creation. “Jesus rises from the waters; the world rises with him.”[6] Jesus is one person with two natures, human and divine. He took our fallen human nature into the waters. The weight of fallen humanity would cause any sinner to drown, it is only God who made man, that can carry the weight of fallen humanity into the waters without drowning.

MOVIE “Spiderman 2 – Doc Ock Dies” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:20

<http://youtu.be/B6jKqZbiHQo>

In this movie Doc Ock has to make a choice, he was good but the tentacles have begun to control him and make him bad. The tritium that Doc Ock created is going to destroy everything. This tritium is symbolic of sin. Spiderman convinces Doc Ock that he can still do the good, that he can destroy bad. Doc Ock says there is only one way to destroy the tritium and that is to “drown it”. There is only one way to destroy sin and that is to drown it in the waters of baptism. In baptism we “bury sinful humanity in the waters.” Doc Ock does not die a monster and if we live out our baptism we too do not die a monster.

At the same time that humanity is being buried in the waters, the waters are being touched by the divine nature of Jesus and thus the waters are sanctified “for our sake and in readiness for us”. The waters of baptism, made holy by the Son of God, await us. There is only one baptism. “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.”[7] Our baptism is therefore one and the same as the Baptism of our Lord. We profess at Mass the Nicene Creed in which we state, “I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.” It is in this one baptism, that our sinful humanity is buried and we rise a new creation with Christ, we are touched by the waters, and now as “sons” and “daughters” we are “called to the one hope that belongs to your call.” We are called to be holy, as Christ is holy.

We are called to heaven and heaven is now possible. “The heavens like Paradise with its flaming sword, closed by Adam for himself and his descendants, are rent open.”[8]

As the Catechism teaches, “Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in his own baptism anticipates his death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father’s beloved son in the Son and ‘walk in newness of life.’”[9] The Christian’s life is a life of living out our baptismal vows. Our assimilation to Jesus and our walking in the “newness of life” needs to be manifested to the world; people should be able to see in our life, that we are in thought, word, and deed, Christian. This newness of life is not just a change from the “old” but freshness and light to a world, which so easily becomes stale and dark. In the so called culture of death, the Christian and his “newness of life” gives both hope and witness of Christ, who says, “Behold, I make all things new.”[10] Our Lord says this while sitting on the throne of Heaven. It is at our Baptism that He comes to sit on the throne of our heart and say to us, “Behold, I make all things new.”

How are we united with Christ in our baptism? We are united to Christ, and become one with Him in our baptism, since He is the “son”, we too are born again and become a “son” and “daughter” of God as we connect to Jesus. As Saint Gregory of Nazianzus once said, “Let us be buried with Christ by Baptism to rise with him; let us go down with him to be raised with him; and let us rise with him to be glorified with him..”[11] “By Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an ‘adopted son’ he can henceforth call God ‘Father,’ in union with the only Son.”[12] Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are made “sons” of God and God can say to us the very same words to us as He said to Jesus at His Baptism, “This is my beloved son.” “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.”[13] We are a “son” of God because we have believed and accepted that the Son of God lives within us. This belief and acceptance first happened at our Baptism. God the Father, sees the life of His beloved Son within our hearts. We have made a place for the Son of God in our hearts. Saint Augustine says, “The only Son of God became a son of man to make men sons of God.”[14]

the Savior.

VIDEO – “Voice of God?” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:34

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItE1rp4wYxg>

Scripture meditation on the Voice of God from 1 Kings.

Communication is two ways. We must hear the voice of God but we must also let our voice be heard. **How can we most perfectly let our voice be heard?** In the Liturgy, the prayers of the Church, “the Church is praying through my mouth, I offer Her my tongue to pray with Her for all the great objectives of redemption, and for God’s honor and glory.”[68] This is why at the Mass we listen to the prayers but also join our mind, heart and lips to those prayers. We also do this through the Liturgy of the Hours. The Liturgy of the Hours is very often chanted by monks and nuns and done so more like a whisper than a song, thus in the chant we recall the same whisper that Elijah heard on the mountain. This whisper or soft chant is more impressive the larger the community that is chanting. The Church also has countless prayers and devotions, such as the Rosary. In prayers such as the Hail Mary we are joining our words with the words of great Saints such as the Angel Gabriel “Hail Mary, full of Grace”[69], Saint Elizabeth “Blessed are you among women”[70] and all the faithful past, present and future “pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.”

Conversion includes not just hearing the voice of God, but calling out to God. It is the process of hearing, believing and calling upon God. “But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?”[71] We remember that it is not we that call God first, but rather He that calls us first. He calls, we believe. This belief leads us to proclaim and call His name and say, “But Thou, O Lord, art in our midst, and Thy holy name is called upon by us; do not forsake us, O Lord our God.”[72] What is important then is that the voice of God is heard and that it is the actual voice of God, not what people believe to be the voice of God. When the voice of God is heard, it must also be kept. Jesus compares those whom keep the word of God, to His Mother. “A woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him [Jesus], ‘Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!’ But he said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’ **Have we heard the word of God, correctly?** It is important to listen to the Church, who is the

that Brian came to realize that God was Father and to have a relationship as a “son” to the Father.

We sometimes have the misconception that God’s voice is booming. In the book of 1 Kings, the prophet Elijah doesn’t hear God’s voice in an earthquake or a fire but in a whisper. Some may expect condensation, anger, and punishment in the voice of God. It is not just to project these negative feelings or attributes onto God.

What do we hear from the voice of God in today’s Gospel?

We hear, “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.”

How does God’s Word appear in the New Testament? First we must realize that the Word of God does not change from Old Testament to New Testament, it is the same Word, for God does not change. The Word however is revealed fully in the Word made Flesh, Jesus Christ. “This Word, this Wisdom, is show us under the appearance of a Child. Let nothing keep us from approaching him. We might fear were he seated on a throne in his palace; but he is lying on a crib in a stable...what courage is needed to go near him in Bethlehem, where all is sweetness and silence, and a simple Little Babe!”[65] In the Old Testament, the Word of God is revealed in a whisper. In the New Testament, it is not in a whisper, but rather in complete silence, for even a baby cannot whisper or utter a single word. We remember this silence in the Christmas Carol “Silent Night”. **Why the silence? Why does God choose in the Nativity to be silent, what could come from silence?** “The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, and the fruit of service is peace.”[66] It is the Christ child born on that silent night that brings peace to the world. A baby cannot speak at all for many years and so it is with the Christ child that speaks not through His words as He takes on flesh but rather through His example. We cannot argue with a baby, in fact we cannot use our ears at all, but must use our eyes and behold Him that comes to save us. We hear the words “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world”[67] and we are reminded that we must behold before we can receive.

MUSIC – “Bing Crosby - Do You Hear What I Hear”- POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:44

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWjzTAKWLBm>

This classic Christmas Carol asked if we are attentive and hear, see and understand the circumstances surrounding the birth of

Do we believe God when he says to us, “This is my beloved Son”? “This is the manifestation (‘Epiphany’) of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Son of God.”[15] This title tells us so much, but above all it tells us that we are precious and of value in the eyes of God, even if we do not feel precious or valued in the eyes of the world.

Story - \$20 bill

There was a young lady in her early to mid-twenties who was riding on an airplane and was bumped up to first class. She had never been in first class so did not know what to expect. When she arrived everyone was quiet and kept to themselves. She proceeded to sit down and stayed quite herself, when she noticed that those around her seemed to be curious about why she was in first class. Usually those in first class were older, or people on business. Maybe the only time a young person flies first class is if they are famous, maybe a singer or actor. The man next to the lady, continued to act curious so she decided to say to Him, “You don’t know who I am do you?” The man was now very curious and had to apologize that he did not know who she was. She continued and said, “I can’t believe you don’t know who I am?” After making the man wait for a awhile, she said, “I am a daughter of God”.

This story shows us that in the eyes of others we are valued by what we have or what we are, not who we are. **What is more important, what we are or who we are?** Being a daughter of God is much more important than being a celebrity, but people notice us so often for what we are or what we have rather than who we are.

Why do we feel sometimes that we are of no value? This same young lady gave an analogy of a \$20 bill and how no matter what you do to a \$20 bill it still has value. She asked a volunteer to come to the front and asked if the person wanted the \$20, they of course said yes. She then crumbled the bill up and asked do you still want it, the person said yes. She then took the crumbed bill and stuffed it in her sock, walked around on it, took it out and asked if the person still wanted it. They said yes. She then stuck the crumbed, stinky bill in her mouth and began to chew on it, the person when asked if they wanted it still said yes. Finally she uncrumbled it and in front of the person ripped off about a ¼ of the bill. They still wanted it.

Why did the person still want the bill? Because it still had value. In our lives we are crumbled up sometimes, we stink from our sin, we even feel as if we have been chewed up and spit out and sometimes the pain is so bad we feel ripped into pieces. Even with all of that we, like the \$20 bill have value. We have value primarily because we are created in the image and likeness of God. It is God himself our creator who we ask “be my helper and my deliverer”[16] and “keep us, Lord, as the apple of Thine eye”[17] and “shelter us under the shadow of Thy wings”[18]. It is God, our loving creator and father that helps and delivers us, that has us always in His loving eyes and shelters us under the shadow of His wings. We have value because He has claimed us as His own, by making us His “son”, his “daughter”, though our Baptism. There is no greater value.

SPORTS – ESPN “Patrick Henry Hughes - Inspirational Story” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 6:59

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qTiYA1WiY8>

Patrick Hughes is a young man at Univ. of Louisville who was born blind and crippled and yet now plays the piano beautifully as well as "marches" in the Louisville marching band. This video shows the true value of a son, with the simple the fact, they are a son. The Father sacrifices all for the son and the son sacrifices all for the Father.

Pleasing God - Lesson and Discussion

“...with whom I am well pleased”

In the Gospel reading, the word “son” and the word “pleased” are important. God wants to be pleased by us and wants to be pleased with us. We should want to please Him.

Why would we want to please God? Some might please God so they do not get in trouble, so they don’t get on God’s bad side. Some might please God so they can get something, a reward from the One that has everything. Some might want to please God for the sole reason of pleasing the one they love.

Why do we please others? Many times we please others to get something, or so the person does not get mad at us. If we really think about it, it is rare that we would do something for someone just to please them, and to expect nothing in return. To please solely for loves sake is difficult, because we seem to always ask the question, “What is in it for me?”

healed.”[59]

What do we expect a father to say? We see an example of a Father’s love in the Old Testament in the following words in which God is compared to a loving mother. “Could a mother ever forget her infant, and not take compassion on the child of here womb? Even if a mother should forget, I would never forget you, says the Lord. My father and my mother have neglected me, but you, Lord, have lifted me up. Even if a mother should forget, I would never forget you, says the Lord”[60] We look especially to the New Testament with a focus on the Gospel, the Life of Jesus, who is the “Word made flesh”[61]. If anyone thinks that the voice of God is angry, condescending or punishing they need only to look at the Jesus, the Word made flesh. The totality of Jesus’s life is the Word of God. The phrase, actions speak louder than words could not be truer than in the life of Jesus, the Word made flesh.

If people say that the voice of God is condescending, angry and punishing, how can we refute these falsehoods through the example of the Gospel? We remember Jesus saying; “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him”[62] There are two comings of Jesus. The first coming, we celebrate during Christmas and meditate on as Christians “is in the flesh and in weakness, and is for the salvation, not for the judgment of the world.”[63] The second coming, which is of judgment, we meditate on during the season of Advent. Jesus comes not to condemn but to heal. “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”[64] We also point to the actual voice of God in the Gospel today, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” **Does the voice of God in today’s Gospel sound condescending, angry, and punishing?** These are nice and lovely words from God, not words of condensation, anger or punishment. God says that He is pleased with His Son.

VIDEO “I Am Second - Brian 'Head' Welch - Ex-Guitarist of KORN”

POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 7:45

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOeruTrdF1Q>

Even someone deep in the world and deep in sin can be converted by the words of the Gospel. Brian Welch, was transformed by the voice of God, “Come to me all those who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest”. It was through the voice of God,

Apostle Paul tells us that, “faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.”[54] If Christ is not preached, the voice of God will not be heard and if the voice of God is not heard, there will be no faith in God, nor Christ, nor the Church. We must preach Christ, the Gospel. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!”[55] It is easy to be judgmental towards Atheists and those who either do not believe that God speaks or those that have a skewed view of the voice of God. Before we judge, we must ask the question, does this person know the Gospel; have they heard the preaching of Christ? Many times people have not heard the Gospel or the Gospel has been presented to them in a false way. **How can we then preach Christ? How can we share the Gospel?** We start with the simple stories of Christ’s life found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We start with the twenty mysteries of the Rosary, which are all based on the Gospel. We start with the parables of Christ. Share the Gospel and let God speak for Himself, we do not need to speak on behalf of God, for He has spoken to all of humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Good News, the Gospel.

We can see many misconceptions of the voice of God in our modern culture. In the movie Dogma, it is stated that Christians “act out of fear of an intangible parent figure that shakes a finger at us from thousands of years ago and says do it or I’ll spank you.” Only those who are baptized can call God Father and know that “Our Father” does not say “Do it or I will spank you?” We instead know the totality of the Word of God. The Christian, “as an ‘adopted son’ can call God ‘Father,’ in union with the only Son.”[56] And because they are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’[57] We call God, “Our Father” and so we that pray this prayer must listen to the voice of the Father, not what others say the voice of the Father is. In regards to “spanking” or punishment, we are reminded of the words of Saint Paul to the Hebrews, “You have also forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons: ‘My son, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reprovved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines; he scourges every son he acknowledges.’[58] The chastisement of God brings only good. We are “sons” of God and therefore will be chastised as Christ was chastised. “Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured. While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were

It is amazing that God desires to be pleased by us. God has everything, yet what truly brings Him pleasure is when we think of Him, speak to Him and desire to give Him pleasure. Our vocation, our calling, to bring pleasure to God is seen at the beginning and end of our life. When we are baptized, our heavenly Father says to us, the same words He said to Jesus, “this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”. If we are faithful children, God will say to us at the end of our lives, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.”[19] The parable of the talents in Matthew’s Gospel compares the faithful to servants and God to a master. Like Mary we are a slave, a handmaid of the Lord. “The slave, one can say, did not have a will of his own, nor could he have any desire independent of his master’s. Our Lady agrees with the greatest joy and with all her heart to have no other wish than that of her Master and Lord. She gives herself to him unreservedly, without condition.”[20] We can be both slave and son. We have the dignity of a son, yet the humility of a slave. “So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then and heir.”[21]

Why can it be helpful to view ourselves as a slaves or servants sometimes? As a son or daughter? We can look to the parable of the prodigal son. The prodigal son becomes complacent and takes for granted his son ship while in his father’s house. He goes so far as to ask for his inheritance and separates himself from his father. He cares nothing about the relationship he has with his father but instead wants only what the father can give him materially. It is only when he loses all, when he humbles himself and longs for his father’s presence that he finally comes to the realization that, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.”[22] When the son returns home remorseful and fully ready to be a servant, it is the father that refuses to let him be a servant but instead treats him as a son. Jesus emptied himself as a slave, a servant on the Cross and it was the Roman centurion that recognized not a slave hanging on the Cross but instead recognized a Son as he professed, “Truly this was the Son of God!”[23] Mary, is the humble handmaid of the Lord, but is “blessed among all woman” and exalted by the Father as the Queen of Heaven. We must imitate Jesus and Our Lady by humbling our self and although we are seen always in the eyes of God as a precious son and daughter, we remember that we are not worthy of this honor. We remember Jesus’s words, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

another's feet.”[24] We remember Our Lady's words, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”[25]

We are sons and daughters of God and therefore we are God's children. A child is motivated to obey or please a parent primarily for two reasons. The child fears a punishment of not obeying and or desires a reward for obeying. The child fears disappointing the parent and or desires to please the parent. Our relationship with Our Heavenly Father is the same. “O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.”[26] We say in the Act of Contrition that we detest our sins.

Why do we detest sin? Yes we hate sin because it brings us punishment and suffering, but ultimately it is the goal of each Christian to have a relationship with God. This relationship should be such that, we don't want to offend the one we are in relationship with and we know that the one we love deserves all our love. If we do not detest sin we must ask the Holy Spirit to convince us of sin, for we cannot detest sin if we do not believe in sin or know what is wrong and what is right. “I will send him [Holy Spirit] to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment; of sin, because they do not believe in me.”[27] If we do not detest or hate our sin, we will continue to sin.

Give examples of when you have done the right thing only because you feared punishment. Give examples of when you have done the right thing out of love for another. We are motivated to do good out of fear or out of love and sometimes a mixture of the two. Our primary motivation should be out of love. We are told by Saint John, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts our fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because he first loved us.”[28] It is the love of God that leads us to love and away from fear.

What will the love of God lead us to do? The love of God will lead us to think how good God is; often to speak to Him in our hearts; and always to seek to please Him.[29] When people are “in love” they tend to think, speak and want to please the one

the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”[53]

What are examples in our life of when we have practiced docility? When have we been like clay in the hands of God, the potter? What is the fruit that came from our decision to be docile?

The Voice of God - Lesson and Discussion

“And a voice came from the heavens”

The Word of God is mentioned a lot in our faith and should be clearly understood. The prophets speak the Word of God. Jesus is the Word made flesh. Holy Scripture is called the Word of God. Words tell us a lot about a person. We can listen to a person for 30 minutes and tell a lot about them just by their words, this is what psychologists are trained in. Words can label a person forever, especially in the world of politics. Because words and personality are so integrated, we sometimes anticipate or project what a person will say or would say. We sometimes say, “Oh, I know that person and they wouldn't say that”, or we say, “I know her and she would totally say that.” To make an assumption of what a person would say is unfair. It is equally unfair to judge a person on only a few words. We must look at the sum of a person's words.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - Seven Words (Part I)]

In the Gospel at Mass we hear that a “voice came from heaven”. **What do people/we expect to hear from the voice of God?** In a society, which is sometimes angry at God and has even rejected God; people can unfairly assume what the voice of God says. People may also attribute words or phrases to God, which are not realistic. People may also pick a few words of God, which might portray Him as angry or hostile, and then disregard the whole picture, the sum of the words of God.

MOVIE – “Amadeus – Voice of God” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:22

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGSzeHKgHfl>

In this clip Amadeus describes a symphony as the voice of God.

What are some other analogies of the Voice of God?

When there is not a clear and correct belief in God, there will not be a clear and correct voice of God. People will hear, not the voice of God, but rather what they think the voice of God is. The

head.”[49] Saint Peter who would later be martyred being crucified upside down was truly washed clean by the blood of the lamb, the blood of martyrdom. The blood would have literally started at his feet and then flowed down to his hands and finally his head. We must be “washed clean like Peter, not only by the washing of his feet.”[50] The faithful, in the example of St. John and St. Peter must not only accept baptism by water, but also be ready to accept baptism by blood if necessary

What is the most important day of your life? “In Baptism we receive faith and grace. The day we were baptized was the most important day of our lives. Just as the parched land does not yield its fruit if it does not get water, so also we who were like dried sticks can produce fruits of life only if we receive freely the gentle and abundant rainfall of grace from on high (St. Irenaeus). Before we received baptism we were outside the locked gates of Paradise, unable to bring forth the slightest supernatural fruit.”[51]

Story – Clovis[52]

In the Fifth century, Clovis, the barbarian King of the Franks and first King of what would become France, married a Burgundian princess, St. Clotilda, who was a fervent Catholic. She prayed for him and gave him good example. Finally toward the end of the century, he accepted the Faith. It is said that, during this instruction, when he heard of the Crucifixion, he cried out: “Oh, if only I had been there with my Franks!” Clovis was converted from paganism and he and three thousand of his army were baptized on the same day. How do both St. Clotilda and Clovis show the virtue of docility? Clotilda is open by marrying, teaching, praying for and being a good example to her pagan husband. Clovis is open to being taught a new faith and as a King humbling himself to receive Christ the King. What is the fruit of their docility? Clotilda is blessed with having her husband convert and unite with her in the true faith. Clovis by his kingly example encourages three thousand of his men to be baptized and join him in the true faith. Through his obedience Catholic France, who is called the eldest daughter of the Church is born.

The virtue of docility is best seen in the analogy of clay and the potter. It is God that gives this analogy to the prophet Jeremiah who speaks it to the people of Israel and to us. “Then the word of the Lord came to me: ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? Says the Lord. Behold, like the clay in

they love. God is in love with us and He thinks and speaks to us constantly and it is His desire to please us. **Why is it sometimes easy for us to concentrate on thinking, speaking and pleasing others, but not God?**

MOVIE – “Princess Bride – As You Wish” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 1:51

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbX1U1tx9aw>

Westley loves Buttercup and only wants to do what she asks. He is patient, kind, and loving even when she doesn’t love him back. **How can we trust God more and say “As you wish” to whatever God asks of us?**

MOVIE “ELF – Buddy meets Walter” POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:38

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ta4hOX2iDIU>

Buddy the Elf wants one thing only to think, speak and please his father. He does not care what others think about this, this is his mission.

How can we think of God? Speak to God? Please God? One of the main ways is through prayer throughout the day, which is thinking and speaking to God. The fruit of prayer, which is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit motivates and encourages us to actions that are pleasing to God. Anytime we avoid evil and pursue good, we are pleasing God. We must challenge ourselves to live what the Church prays in the Liturgy of the Hours, “Day and night I cry to you, my God.”[30] This week let’s make a conscious effort to please God. The effort should be just as conscious as our efforts to please someone we wish to impress or we truly love. It is God that deserves all our love, all our thoughts and who longs to hear our voice. The greatest commandment is “to love God with all your heart, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”[31] “Nothing gives such pleasure to God as the conversion and salvation of men.”[32] The greatest way we can please God is to as Saint Paul says, “work out our salvation”[33] and continue our conversion of our mind, heart and actions away from sin and toward good each day.

What can happen if we spend our whole life trying to please others and self, rather than God? “Now I find it hard to live my own life, pleasing everyone, while I’m just dead inside”[34] God is capable of being pleased because He is by nature constant. In other words when God tells us what pleases Him, that doesn’t change. What pleases Him, will always please Him.

What offends Him, will always offend Him. People are hard to please because they are not constant; their expectations vary from one day to the next. If we try to just please people we will become very frustrated.

Why might it become frustrating trying to please everyone else? We are not called to please everyone, we are called to please God. When our goal is to please God and we indeed do please God, we will find it easy to live our own life, pleasing God, while we are alive inside. One of the biggest lies of Satan is that God cannot be pleased. How many people have a view of God, in which God is an angry, mad and never pleased? If we believe that God cannot be pleased and we begin to see that we cannot please others there are two options left. We begin to live life only to please our self, which is also impossible or we give up altogether and begin to believe that pleasure itself is not possible.

The Virtue of Docility [Part I] - Lesson and Discussion

“John tried to prevent him [Jesus]...Then he [Saint John the Baptist] allowed him”

What is Docility? Docility is the willingness to be taught. We see in the Gospel that when Jesus approached Saint John the Baptist and asked to be baptized, Saint John tried to prevent Jesus from being baptized. Jesus looked at him and said, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Saint John did not protest but instead was willing to be taught. He did not understand exactly why he was baptizing the sinless, Son of God, but he was willing to be taught. It would be the great teacher, Jesus, who would teach Saint John the Baptist and all of us, why it is that Jesus was baptized.

What is the fruit the result of Saint John’s docility? Obedience is the first fruit, because he allowed Jesus to be baptized. We first must be willing to be taught. Once we are taught, we can begin to understand, and once we understand we can act. Saint John through his obedience allowed the will of God to be done. Revelation is the second fruit. Due to Saint John’s docility, his willingness to be taught, a great teaching or revelation called the Theophany occurred. In the Eastern Church, this feast [Baptism of the Lord] is called “Theophany” because at the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan God appeared in three persons. In the Baptism of the Lord, the Church recalls Our Lord’s second manifestation or epiphany, which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan.

MOVIE – Princess Bride – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:09

http://youtu.be/U_eZmEiyTo0

In the scene we see a man who believes he is the smartest person alive. So he plays a version of roulette with a poisonous drink. The trick was there was poison in both cups, the other had built up a tolerance for it. Satan had believed he had won. That he was the more powerful being, but as we see Jesus who is more humble was able to overcome the odds even when death was on the line.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson – [Three Battles](#)]

The third step in docility is to remain faithful to our vows. All those who are baptized, whether as an infant or an adult, must constantly be reminded and be faithful to the vows that were taken in Baptism. When we dip our hand in holy water, we should remember the waters of our own baptism. It is not enough to take vows; vows must be lived out. It is not enough for a priest or a husband and wife to simply take vows; they must remain faithful. We pray during this feast, “Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful to our calling”[46]

How can we be faithful to our calling? We must remember that we are children and thus be obedient to God, Our Father. We must remember that we are a new creation, born of water, and thus live accordingly. We must remember that we are born of Spirit, and thus must look for the activity and inspiration of the Holy Spirit to direct the thoughts and actions of our life. “The Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses.”[47] Witness means martyr, the ultimate test of our docility is whether or not we are willing to die for Christ.

How did both Saints John the Baptist and Peter show the ultimate sign of docility? Saint John the Baptist says to Jesus, “I ought to be baptized by you”. “We should also add: and for you, for John is to be baptized in blood”[48]. Saint John shortly after baptizing Jesus was martyred for his faith. He was completely open to the will of God. Saint John first protested, Jesus insisted and Saint John remained docile even unto death. During the Last Supper, when Jesus humbled himself to wash the feet of Saint Peter, Saint Peter first protested, Jesus insisted and Saint Peter remained docile. Saint Peter responded to Jesus, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my

comes the guests in our body, which through baptism is made a temple of God. What a great honor, an honor we must cherish and never take for granted. We have been given free will and can choose to “drive away” the divine life within us. This is called mortal sin. Mortal sin is a “grave infraction of the law of God that destroys the divine life in the soul of the sinner, constituting a turn away from God.”[44] It must be a primary concern of ours to never drive away this most noble guest.

How is it that we can destroy our enemy Satan? We can only destroy our enemy through Jesus Christ. Saint Maximus the Confessor says, “Here is the reason why God became a perfect man, changing nothing of human nature, except to take away sin (which was never natural anyway). His flesh was set before that voracious, gaping dragon as bait to provoke him: flesh that would be deadly for the dragon, for it would utterly destroy him by the power of the Godhead hidden within it. For human nature, however, his flesh was to be a remedy since the power of the Godhead in it would restore human nature to its original grace. Just as the devil had poisoned the tree of knowledge and spoiled our nature by its taste, so too, in presuming to devour the Lord’s flesh he himself is corrupted and is completely destroyed by the power of the Godhead hidden in it.”[45]

Saint Maximus describes for us what sounds like an epic cartoon between good and evil. God becomes flesh. The flesh is a bait or disguise to entice the dragon. The flesh doesn’t appear as God, but as a child in a manger, a mere man, and finally a corpus on a cross. Hidden deep within this “flesh” is the Godhead or divinity, which is deadly poison to the dragon. If a person wants to poison another, they do so by putting poison in something desirable. The enemy of Saint Benedict tried twice to poison him, once by placing poison in his wine, and a second time by placing poison in a cake. Satan desires to destroy and devour man “flesh”, therefore God becomes man, God becomes the bait. Satan takes the bait, devouring Jesus through crucifixion. However in devouring Jesus through the crucifixion, Satan is poisoned and defeated. It is the Godhead (divinity) within the flesh hanging on the Cross that kills Satan. For man, the Godhead is not poison, but rather a remedy or medicine. It is the God within the flesh hanging on the Cross that gives man life; this flesh is the fruit of the Tree of Life. It brings death to Satan and life to man. The very flesh that we receive in the Eucharist contains the saving medicine, and is given at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

How is the Baptism of the Lord “a second creation”? The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes. All three Persons of the Trinity are revealed at once, the voice of the Father is heard, the Son is baptized and the Holy Spirit descends as a dove upon the Son. At the first creation, it was the three Persons of the Trinity that created man saying, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”[35] We not only learn about the Holy Trinity at the Baptism of the Lord, but also our dignity, our vocation; ultimately ourselves. Man, first created in the image and likeness of God has tarnished that image due to sin and thus is in need of a second creation. This second creation takes place at the Baptism of the Lord first and then our own baptism which connects us to the one baptism of Christ. Just as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same as the Crucifixion of Our Lord and just as the reception of the Blessed Sacrament is one in the same as the Last Supper, our Baptism is one and the same as the Baptism of the Lord. It is good therefore to remember and renew our Baptism on this great feast, for it is this feast that made Baptism possible for all.

Why did Jesus desire to be baptized? “The Lord desired to be baptized, says St. Augustine, so that he might freely proclaim through his humility what for us was to be a necessity.”[36]

Why is baptism a necessity? “The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this Sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are “reborn of water and the Spirit.”[37]

What are the steps of docility (of openness)? The first step in docility is to be baptized and to submit and be open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the beginning, and is the seed. We must pay close attention to our end “heaven”, for the work of the Holy Spirit it to get us to heaven. In every race you have a finish line and a starting line, baptism is not the end but the beginning. The symbols we are given at Baptism remind us of our end, our goal.

What were we given at our baptism? We were given a white garment and a candle. **What is the significance of the white garment and the candle?** “Baptism is the seed, the cause of our whole Christian life and of all the graces which we have received and will receive until we die. Furthermore, beyond the limits of this earthly life, Baptism is the cause and beginning of our eternal glory. This was prefigured by the white robe and the lighted candle which the Church presented to us at the sacred fount: ‘Receive this white garment and wear it without spot until you come to the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to have eternal life. Receive this burning candle and preserve untarnished the grace of your Baptism’ (Roman Ritual).”[38]

What three events manifest the Epiphany? The manifestation of Jesus Christ or the Epiphany is threefold: The adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of the Lord, and the Wedding at Cana. Through these mysteries Jesus manifests Himself as the Son of God, as divine. This manifestation does not only tell us who and what Jesus is, but who and what we are. “Yes, Christ is the light because, in his divine identity, he reveals the Father's face. But he is so too because, being a man like us and in solidarity with us in everything except sin, he reveals man to himself. Unfortunately sin has obscured our capacity to know and follow the light of truth, and indeed, as the Apostle Paul realized, it has exchanged "the truth about God for a lie" (Rom 1:25). By the Incarnation, the Word of God came to bring full light to man. In this regard the Second Vatican Council says that it is "only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the, mystery of man truly becomes clear" (Gaudium et spes, n. 22).”[39]

The Holy Father says, “sin has obscured our capacity to know and follow the light of truth.” In the Eastern Church there are two theological terms, theosis and kenosis, which help us to understand our capacity for God. Theosis is a "deification," or "divinization". It is the process of a worshiper becoming free of *hamartia* "missing the mark" or sin, and being united with God, beginning in this life and later consummated in bodily resurrection. Theosis is the process of being filled with the divine life.

What hinders our capacity to be filled with God? First, a vessel cannot be filled up if it is already full. This is why we must be free or emptied of sin. Kenosis (from the Greek word for emptiness is the 'self-emptying' of one's own will and becom-

ing entirely receptive to God's divine will. Second, we must have a desire to be filled up. “He [God] reveals himself to the extent that he knows someone is capable of receiving him. He diminishes the revelation of his glory not out of selfishness but because he recognizes the capacity and resources of those who desire to see him.”[40] We must not only be open and capable, but we must desire. We have a merciful and gracious God who desires to reveal Himself to us in the measure that we are able to receive Him. Let us desire then to receive Him in the greatest possible measure.

The Virtue of Docility [Part II] - Lesson and Discussion

“John tried to prevent him [Jesus]...Then he [Saint John the Baptist] allowed him”

The second step in docility is to know our enemy, the evil one, who wants to prevent us from getting to heaven. We pray in the Our Father, “lead us not into temptation and deliver us from the evil one”[41] The Sacrament of Baptism is the answer to this petition. In the Rite of Baptism, we pray “Depart from him, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the consoler...So live that you will indeed be a temple of God.”[42]

We also proclaim the following vows:

Priest: Do you renounce Satan? **Sponsor/Catechumen:** I do

Priest: And all of his works? **Sponsor/Catechumen:** I do

Priest: And all his empty promises? **Sponsor/Catechumen:** I do

Priest: Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth?

Sponsor/Catechumen: I do believe.

Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, Who was born and Who suffered?

Sponsor/Catechumen: I do believe.

Priest: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?

Sponsor/Catechumen: I do believe.

“Thanks to the Sacrament of Baptism you have been turned into a temple of the Holy Spirit, says Leo the Great. Don't ever let it happen, he exhorts us, that you drive away so noble a guest by your evil deeds, or ever again submit to the power of the demon: for the price you were bought with is the blood of Christ.”[43] Through our baptism Satan has to flee. The Divine Trinity be-