

Homily for Sunday Mass
January 13, 2019
Year C – Baptism of the Lord
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22
----Father Mike Cadotte----

Today's Gospel reading from Luke marks the beginning of the ministry of Jesus through His baptism in the flowing waters of the Jordan with his cozen John there waiting to humbly perform the sacred act knowing he was not even worthy to remove His sandal.

This event is worth taking a moment to recall our baptism, and the meaning it has for all Christians as we encounter God through the sacrament both physically and spiritually.

As newly baptized Christians, we become part of the Body of Christ through Christ's Church; and this is a joy we now all share together as one in the Body of Christ. In our baptism, we crossed over like the people crossed over the Jordan into the spiritual world and into the Promised Land. Before they crossed over, they only had the Word which God gave through the prophets; but now that we have journeyed through our baptism, we now have your eyes and minds open to the mystery, the sacrament, that we have partaken in.

Our baptism did not just happen by a ritual cleansing of our physical body with a physical element, that being water. No, we were baptized in the Holy Spirit through the intercession of a priest. Remember your past life and recall the teachings of creation of the earth and how the earth was without form and void and the Spirit of the Lord, "swept over the water..." (GEN 1:2). Water is not first physical but spiritual. It pre-exists the physical and was with God. Through its spiritual cleansing powers water also, secondarily, cleanses the physical too.

Consider another teaching of the great flood and Noah sending out a raven, which did not return, and later a dove which returned with an olive branch. As in our baptism, the raven represents the sin that is removed from you, washed away by the water, never to return.

Wood is where the Lord Jesus was fastened when He suffered for us. The dove it is in whose appearance the Holy Spirit descended, as we learn and grow in the Word of the New Testament; He breaths into us peace of soul and tranquility of mind. (St. Ambrose)

We are now baptized in Christ Jesus; and therefore, what we experienced is nothing less than a transformation into the light. We, as did Jesus, experience God's mystery hidden in simple water but moved within you great things through the Holy Spirit.

So, if we approached our baptism less than worthy and moved through it, with the intercession of water and the Holy Spirit, to be cleansed, what of Jesus. Jesus was without sin and pure but, yet He stood with humanity, with each of us, that day at the banks of the Jordan and journeyed with us to a new life through baptism. He continues

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to journey with us today. No matter the issue, event, struggle, conflict, or regret, Jesus is there with you. He will humble himself along side of you and through His never-ending love, will always be there to deliver you back safe, cleansed and whole.

Thus, "...as the grand and uplifting events of the Christmas Season give way to resulting lack of energy and the packing up of decorations, presents, and outward expression of "good will", let us not pack away the hope that is Jesus through prayer. Among all our good intentions and resolutions, let us include a re-commitment to embracing the "fire of His love" in our hearts so we, too, can go forth again to bring Jesus to today's needy in our families, communities, and the world." (Dr. Lanie LeBlanc OP)

We can find this re-commitment, just as Jesus did after being baptized, through prayer. Jesus, always in connection with the Lord, heard in prayer God speaking to him on the banks of the River Jordan. From the open heavens the comforting and empowering Holy Spirit comes down on him like a dove; and a voice from heaven speaks: 'You are my Son the Beloved; my favor rests on you.' It was from this gentle and warm words of His parent, that Jesus understands that the time has come for His ministry to begin here on earth.

Our baptism has also prepared us to be one of God's children. We have been cleansed and marked by the Holy Spirit and forever under God's loving care. Yes, there are going to be times where that is challenged, not by God but by our own issues and fears, but God is always there to give us comfort and love – we just need to take that knee, as Christ did at the River Jordan, and pray. The Prophet Isaiah described to us why this is so when God asks him to, "Tell [my people] that I love them. Show them that I love them. Gather them together and bring them back to me.'

Through our baptism we are with God and God is with us. Remember this and follow the example of Jesus in today's Gospel reading and call upon God when you are in need. Remember you are cleansed, and that Jesus has again, started His journey with you. Personally, right there beside you along the way – through the good and the bad.

AMEN