

# Baptism

My dear friends in Christ,

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. This is another instance of the revelation of divine presence in the world in the person Jesus. We see this well captured in today's gospel where heaven opened and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus, an action through which Jesus is identified as the Christ foretold by the prophets. The Voice from heaven authenticated this reality when he said: *"This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."* This is another Epiphany that extends our understanding of Christmas as a continuation of celebrating the incarnate Jesus Christ who dwelt among us.

Prior to the sound of the voice from heaven, the gospel tells us that the people were filled with expectation for the Messiah and wondered if John the Baptist was the Christ. But their thirst for the Messiah was satisfied not only from the words of the voice of the Father from heaven and the presence of the Holy Spirit, but also through the works of Jesus Christ. His works of peace and healing of souls was so transformative that Peter, very convinced of their effects, echoed the voice of the Father when he professed: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Mt 16:16), and later he says *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God"* (John 6:68-69).

Through the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan river, we as members of the Body of Christ (the Church), recognize the institution of the Sacrament of Baptism insofar as the baptismal water through contact with the humanity of Christ has a sanctifying power which heals our souls from the wound of sin. So the Baptism of Jesus is an archetype of our Baptism, for through the Sacrament of Baptism, each one of us becomes a child of God by receiving the Holy Spirit and therefore is pleasing to God.

Today's feast concludes the liturgical season of Christmas. But the faith we professed at our individual baptisms takes us beyond Christmas season. We professed that we believe in God and in the Body of Christ, that is, in each other. Now is the time to nourish that faith. How?

Spend some time in private prayer this week. Our parish Adoration Chapel is open on Thursdays and Fridays for adoration and private prayer time before the Blessed Sacrament; join us on Wednesday for Mass, dinner and Adult Faith Formation class;

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come to Bible class on Thursday at 10:45 am for an enriching faith sharing experience.

May the Holy Spirit inflame your heart with love.

***--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule  
Parish Priest***