

## You Have Put On Christ

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Is 55:1-11

| 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1 Jn 5:1-9

| Gospel: Mk 1:7-11

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The peace of Christ be with you!

**GROW:** Those of you who are parents or godparents remember fondly the day of your child or godchild's baptism. There was that feeling of warmth from the gathered assembly and from extended family and friends as they joined the parents in welcoming their beloved infant into Christ's Church. The smell of the chrism from the anointing of his head with oil and the sound of the flowing waters served as visceral reminders of the precious child's birth into new, divine life with Jesus. Today, as we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we give thanks to Jesus, who at his baptism immersed himself into the enormous weight of humanity's sinfulness (while of course remaining sinless himself). Marking the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus' baptism is the foundation for our own, inviting us to become God's own sons and daughters "in whom he is well pleased." Just as the Spirit descended upon Jesus and anointed him, the Spirit descends on us at our baptism, empowering us to follow Jesus' example and build up the kingdom of God.

**GO:** Water and oil are two of the symbols of baptism; a third is the white garment (sometimes a bib placed over a small child) worn by the one being baptized. As we read in the *Catechism*, "The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has 'put on Christ,' has risen with Christ." Gratitude is the disposition proper to thinking about our baptism and the ones who brought us to it. How might our lives be different, and richer, if each morning as we dress for the day we pray in gratitude for the ability, and what it means, to "put on Christ" in our daily lives? Baptism is ultimately about putting on Christ and choosing to live like Christ in the world. This means putting Jesus' command to love at the forefront of our lives. Are we ready and willing to answer the call?

Remember that "our infinite sadness can only be cured by infinite love." Many are experiencing a great depth of infinite sadness. They are lost and without a true shepherd. They have no real axis in their lives and do not know how to frame the choices they make or purify their thoughts and feelings. We need to help our world move forward and find a greener pasture beyond the sadness. We can powerfully witness to this by moving beyond our own sadness and embracing hope. Baptism tells us who we are and assures us that we are on a much bigger journey. This is good news indeed!

**ACT:** Express gratitude. Are your parents and godparents still alive? If so, call them or send a card thanking them for their presence at your baptism, and assure them of your prayers. If they are not alive, perhaps think of one or two people who have been there for you in your life as instruments of God's grace. And then extend your gratitude to them.

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts and homes.

--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule

### Announcement

On behalf of all of us, I extend our condolences to Teresa Roberts, our Administrative Assistant, who lost her mother Helen Roberts on December 26, 2020. Teresa has been the caregiver for her mother these past several years. Please pray for the happy repose of Helen, and for consolation for Teresa and her family.