

## 2021 Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph

Homily Aid: Baptism of the Lord – Launch of the Year of the Eucharist January 10, 2021

### *“Who we are and why we Celebrate Mass”*

1. The Baptism of the Lord is the final celebration of the Christmas season.
  - a. Through this feast, as is true throughout the whole Christmas season, we witness God breaking into human history – revealing his abiding presence (*Emmanuel*), his saving love in Jesus, and his unceasing desire for union with all humanity.
2. Jesus does not need to be baptized for he is without sin.
  - a. He does this to unite himself with us, sanctifying the water and taking on our sins.
3. In this feast, as we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, we are also reminded of our own baptism.
  - a. At Jesus’ baptism, the heavens opened and the Father spoke: *“You are my son...”*
  - b. God wants us to hear these words directed to each of us today as we recall our own baptism: *“You are my daughter, you are my son”* (parishes are encouraged to celebrate the blessing and sprinkling of water in place of the common Penitential Act). In this way, we are reminded of who we are and Whose we are.
  - c. In our baptism, God claims us as his own, giving us his own Divine life and making us truly and irrevocably his children. We put on Jesus Christ, who now lives in each of us, and thus, we become *“heirs of his blessed life”* (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1).
4. Today we also celebrate the beginning of the Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph: a time of renewal, healing, and communion
  - a. It is precisely fitting that we begin this important year today, for baptism marks the beginning of our initiation into Jesus Christ, a lifelong journey toward union with Christ and one another.
  - b. The Eucharist is communion with God. Christ nourishes us with his very Body and Blood so that we can be joined more closely to him and to all humanity
5. At the baptism of Jesus and our baptism, the heavens are opened with God and humanity being brought into union. So too, at each Mass, the heavens are opened and God comes to save us (and give himself to us!)
  - a. *“God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created humanity to make us share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to humanity”* (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1; this entire paragraph, *“The Life of Man, To Know and Love God,”* is profitable and helpful for reflection in preparation of the homily).
6. With the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, we conclude the Christmas season, and begin the Year of the Eucharist.
  - a. We are reminded that like Christ who was sent by the Holy Spirit after his baptism to begin his saving mission to the world, we, too, are sent (for that is what *“Mass”* means), to continue the saving mission of Jesus in the world, for we are the Body of Christ.
  - b. We live in a hurting and broken world and the love and presence of Christ is needed desperately by so many.
  - c. The Lord is near and remains with us, he is inviting us to recognize his presence, receive him completely, and bear his saving presence in the world.
  - d. The Eucharist is an opportunity to become what we receive and it is food for the journey in our mission of discipleship.
7. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian Life
  - a. As Church we gather with the Lord, we go out with the Lord, and we come back to the Lord. We are who we are because of Whose we are!

8. During this Year of the Eucharist, we will focus on three primary areas: Explanation of the Mass, the Real Presence of Christ, and the Meaning and Importance of our Obligation to Sunday Mass.
  - a. Each month, like today, there will be a particular Sunday during which the homily will focus on explaining different parts of the Mass.
  - b. Now having begun this important Year of the Eucharist, let us pray that the risen Jesus who comes to us in Word and Sacrament will continually draw us deeper into communion with him so that we can more effectively witness his love in the world.