

Jesus is fully human but without sin. So why would he be baptized? In solidarity with all human beings, Jesus' demonstrates his willingness to bear the weight of our sins by being immersed in the waters of the Jordan River for baptism.

"What followed the baptism revealed his divinity and his solidarity with and commitment to God his Father"ⁱ The heavens opened. The image of the dove, a symbol for Israel reveals Jesus as the personal embodiment of a new Israel as the Christ, the anointed.ⁱⁱ

Jesus is God's beloved Son. The phrase harkens back to the book of Genesis where Isaac was beloved by Abraham. We recall how Abraham was willing to offer his beloved son, Isaac, to God in sacrifice. The Father, whose voice booms from the heavens identifying his Son, Jesus, is willing to hand over his beloved Son in sacrifice. Isaac was spared from death on the third day. Jesus would be raised from the dead on the third day.ⁱⁱⁱ

This past Wednesday, the nation and the world were shocked by the sinfulness of a mob out of control that shouted profanities, beat back police officers, destroyed property, vandalized the Capitol and tried to intimidate elected officials in an effort to suppress democracy. And there is justifiable outrage with the president who could not accept defeat and incited much of the violence by using words like Molotov cocktails.

Save your people, Lord; bring us together. Help us to end our deep division and to come together as one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. "Grant that where sin has abounded, grace may more abound, so that we can become holier through forgiveness and be more grateful to you."^{iv} Man rebelled against God, and God responded by sending us his only begotten Son, his beloved Son to save us from our sins beginning with his own baptism.

As we wonder how our nation can step back from the brink of anarchy, the words of John the Baptist echo loudly. "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2). Repentance calls for "a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one's life from rebellion to obedience towards God" (Note to Mt 3:2). It is easy to point fingers at others and say the problem lies with someone else. It is not so easy to love our enemy and make personal sacrifice to atone for the social sins of our nation and our world.

In solidarity with all human beings, Jesus' demonstrates his willingness to bear the weight of our sins by being immersed in the waters of the Jordan River for baptism. How might we do something similar in solidarity with all human beings? I am reminded of the prayers of the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood,
Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son,

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

We look to the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. We look to the Sacrifice of the Mass. We echo the words of God the Father to his Beloved Son as he came out of the Jordan River. We acknowledge our own sinfulness, and those of the whole world.

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.

We acknowledge the supreme sacrifice of Jesus in dying for our sins. We pray for mercy for our sins and we pray for the whole world. We pray for those who threatened democracy with an assault on the Capitol. We pray for the many world leaders who abuse their power and break the sacred trust of their office. We pray for those who hurt us and harm us by their sins. We ask for God's mercy to be extended without limit.

Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion inexhaustible,
Look kindly upon us and increase your mercy in us,

that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent,
but with great confidence submit ourselves to your holy will,
which is love and mercy itself.

In asking for an increase in mercy, we are asking for the ability to forgive those who have trespassed against us. We need a share in God's love and mercy to talk with others and to listen and try to understand those we disagree with rather than demonize them.

In the Eucharist, God shares a portion of his divinity with us to help us grow in holiness. In return, we are called to be Christlike with others.

You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls,
and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy,
envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

O Blood and Water,

which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of Mercy for us,
I trust in You!

ⁱ LaVerdiere, Eugene. The Beginning of the Gospel, p 34.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, p 35.

^{iv} Liturgy of the Hours