

## **Baptism of the Lord (B)**

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, and the last day of the Christmas Season. We also begin in the Archdiocese the Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph, so we've got a lot going on today. (Diocesan Year & Pope Francis)

There is much that Jesus' baptism in the Jordan teaches us. One thing that is important to remember is that we become adopted sons and daughters of the Father through our baptism. We are given life through our parents, but we're born fallen due to Original Sin that is passed down through generation. By the Sacrament of Baptism we are recreated anew, and so are brought into God's family. And so we are made the children of God by adoption.

There is a clue from our Gospel that shows us this reality. St. Mark tells us that when Jesus was baptized the voice of the Father was heard, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." Jesus' sonship was revealed at His baptism. The same goes with ours. We are brought into the very person of Christ at our baptism, are brought into His sonship, and are made sons and daughters of God the Father. That is our identity. That is who we are. Sometimes we forget who we are, and so don't act Christ-like, and are susceptible to sin.

Immediately after Jesus gets baptized he heads into the desert for 40 days to pick a fight with the devil. Jesus in His divinity knew exactly what was going to happen, and met Satan head on, and defeated his three temptations. We hear about this every First Sunday of Lent.

This reality shows to us that, once we are made God's sons and daughters by adoption, we become marked targets by evil. Satan went after Jesus; he goes after us too, but the grace of baptism helps to protect us. Baptism grafts us into the victory of Jesus over sin and death. So we really have nothing to fear. We are the victors in this, and should out of that truth. Yet, how many times do we give into temptations to this and that we it comes? Of course Confession is there for our sins to be forgiven, but also to remind again that we are sons and daughters of the Father.

The sequence of Jesus' temptation right after His baptism shows us the reality of sin and evil in the world. Yes, only through Jesus are we victorious, but it doesn't lessen our battle in this life. We were all reminded again this past week that evil exists. I'm referring to the march into the Capitol building this past week. Regardless of our political leanings, I think we all can agree that what happened was not good.

There are two reasons, I think, that shows today is the antidote to the spiritual condition that our country is in at the moment. The first is the celebration of Jesus' baptism. We have been reminded, again, that Jesus alone is victorious over evil. Only by living in Him do we help bring His good news to others. And that is our responsibility as His disciples, to bring the news that only the name of Jesus saves. Salvation does not come with politicians or political parties or anyone

else in this life, but only Jesus Christ. May we help bring this truth to others by how we live, how we act, and what we say on social media.

The second reason that today is the spiritual antidote lies in why we are here in the first place, why we come here every Sunday, and that is to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass. At every Mass we take a moment to listen to God's Word. Then, bread and wine are changed into Jesus' Body and Blood. Then we become one with God Himself, when we receive the Eucharist through Holy Communion. We are here for the Eucharist.

It is very timely that God ordained the Archdiocese to be celebrating the Year of the Eucharist right now. He's always there. He's always watching over us. When we are feeling frightened or scared we should always keep the eyes and ears of our hearts open because God will answer. This Year of the Eucharist is God's answer to us here in the Archdiocese.

St. John Paul II says about the Eucharist, "In that little Host is the solution to all the problems in the world." May we live as a people of the Eucharist, who find direction and purpose from this little Host in our daily lives, and always return for renewal of strength. What the world is looking for, what we all are looking for, can only be found in the Eucharist. May our words and actions help to bring others to know Jesus' love for them, which can only be found in His real presence in the Eucharist. When we gaze upon the Eucharist we gaze upon God's love for us. May we bring this love that we receive to a world that is dying to receive it.