

Feast – Baptism of the Lord by Father Dave

Last weekend the Church celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. This celebration which recalls the arrival of the three Magi is the first public manifestation of the new-born Jesus – and to the Gentile world. This weekend the Church is commemorating the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan by His cousin – John the Baptist. This, too, is a public manifestation or another Epiphany of the Lord. What's different about this revelation of Jesus from last week's is, at His Baptism, we have the first public revelation of all Three Persons in the Holy Trinity, as well as the official revelation of Jesus as the Son of God to the world by the Father. Thus, it is described by all four Gospels as the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

When did Jesus know Who He really was? We can assume that He grew into that knowledge. As He grew from being a little boy to a man, He came to understand Who He was and the saving mission that His Father had sent Him to accomplish.

This is confirmed in the signs that occurred after Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove and a voice from the heavens was heard saying: "*You are My Beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased.*" After His baptism and the forty days that He spent fasting and praying in the desert, Jesus began His public ministry. He began teaching and doing the things necessary to reveal the depths of the Father's love for us, to reveal the Father's plan of salvation, to teach us how to live in order to enter eternal life. Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection would win our salvation and open the way to eternal life. When Jesus began this mission, He did so in firm resolve, with one hundred percent commitment, and in perfect fidelity to the will of His Father.

Similarly, for us to be successful in any endeavor, commitment is essential. Nothing of lasting value happens without commitment. And Commitment is not easy. Our culture sends us many differing messages that work against keeping our commitments.

The Baptism of Jesus should remind us of our own Baptism and the identity we received with that Baptism. We, like Jesus, are also children of the Father. And as with Jesus, the Father is also well-pleased with each of us. That should feel us with a certain sense of pride that we are considered so special by God. With that comes the promise that we, along with the Son, are heirs to the Kingdom and temples of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, not everyone knows of that specialness we have with God.

A story is told of a tiger cub that finds its identity. It's an old Hindu parable about a tiger cub being raised by goats. The cub learned to bleat and nibble grass and behave like a goat. One night a larger tiger attacked the goats, which scattered for their safety. But the tiger cub kept grazing and crying like a goat without getting

frightened. The old tiger roared: "What are you doing here, living with these cowardly goats?" He grabbed the cub by the scruff, dragged him to a pond and said: "Look how our faces are reflected in water! Now you know who you are and whose you are." The tiger took the cub home, taught him how to catch animals, eat their meat, roar and act like a tiger. The tiger cub thus discovered his true self. Today's celebration with its Gospel seems to suggest that Jesus received from Heaven a fresh flash of realization of Who, and Whose, He really was (His identity), and of what He was supposed to do (His mission), on the day of His Baptism in the river Jordan.

Journey back to your own Baptism. Open your ears. Hopefully you will hear the voice of God saying: "You are My beloved child. On you My Favor rests. And I will love you no matter what. God's love and mercy enable us to commit ourselves to living as a disciple of Jesus, and His love and mercy give us the grace and strength we need to live out this call of discipleship.

Every time we enter or leave a Catholic Church we have the opportunity to renew our own Baptism. As we dip our fingers into the Holy Water font, we are reminding ourselves of our own Baptism. As we make the sign of the cross on ourselves with this Holy Water we should be thinking of the fact that we are a child of God, that we have been redeemed by the Cross of Christ, that we have been made a member of God's family, and that we have been washed, forgiven, cleansed and purified at a tremendous price – by the Blood of the Lamb of God. Every time we bless ourselves with this Holy Water we should remind ourselves how special we are in the sight of God.

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World
& for Peace

BULLETIN REFLECTION by Father Rody
JAN 09, 2022...BAPTISM OF OUR LORD...YR
C...LK 3, 15-16, 21-22

Today we celebrate the baptism of our Lord by John the Baptist. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that baptism removes original sin...

(CCC 1262) *The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit. **CCC 1263** By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin...),*

Now let us face the question, did Jesus have original sin that's why He needed to be baptized? Before we answer the question, let me present what is the understanding of the church about original sin...**"original sin is called 'sin' only in an analogical sense: it is a sin 'contracted' and not 'committed'—a state and not an act"** **(CCC 404).**

Now to answer the question did Jesus have original sin, first letter of John will answer that...**1 JN 3, 5** *You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*

Then what is the very purpose of His baptism...just for a display and say to people at that time 'hey you need to imitate me...either you go to John or to me, both work.' Really?

Whenever the priest sprinkles holy water, he says *'let this water call to mind our baptism into Christ who by His death and resurrection has redeemed us.'* Jesus's baptism as our own baptism prefigures our salvation through His death and resurrection. He needs to be baptized because He has to set the tone that our baptism participating in His baptism would eventually lead us as future sharers in the happiness of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus himself said...**MK 16, 16** *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

And as expounded by **CCC 1215** *This sacrament is also called "the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God...*

Then what father? Well, Christ had laid the foundation for baptism then we should do our part...have your baby baptized...**(please do not forget this next part)** as your baby grows, parents and godparents teach him/her about your answer 'I do' (Do you renounce Satan...Do you believe in God...). It is in this manner that we can keep the faith alive and dynamic.