

The Baptism of the Lord (B)

Gospel text (Mk 1:7-11): This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit.”

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

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Today, on the solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, the cycle of Christmas festivities concludes. The Gospel tells us that John had “appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mk 1:4). People went to listen to him, confessed their sins, and were baptized by him in the Jordan River. And among those people, Jesus also presented Himself to be baptized.

During the Christmas festivities, we have seen how Jesus revealed Himself to the shepherds and the magi who, coming from the East, worshiped Him and offered their gifts. Indeed, Jesus' coming into the world is to manifest God's saving love.

And there, at the Jordan, a new manifestation of Jesus' divinity occurred: the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Him, and the voice of the Father was heard: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11). It is the Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit who reveal Him in this instance. It is God Himself who reveals to us who Jesus is, His beloved Son.

But this was not a revelation just for John and the Jews, it was also for us. The same Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, revealed to the Jews at the Jordan, continually reveals to us every day. In the Church, in prayer, in our brothers and sisters, in the Baptism we have received that has made us children of the same Father.

Let us ask ourselves, then: —Do I recognize His presence, His love in my life? —Do I live a true relationship of filial love with God? Pope Francis says, "What God wants from man is a 'father-son' relationship, to caress us, and tells us: 'I am with you'".

Amid our struggles and difficulties, the Father in heaven also says to us: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Baptism has freed us from all evils, which are the sins, but with God's grace we must fulfill all goodness.” (Saint Caesarius of Arles)
- “You parents have a baby boy or girl to baptize. Such is the chain of faith: you have a duty to hand on the faith to these children. It is the most beautiful inheritance you will leave to them. Think about this.” (Francis)
- “Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted (...). Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace, erases original sin and turns a man back towards God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 405)