

Commentary on the Gospel: the Baptism of the Lord (Year C)

Commentary on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." God want us to be part of his family. Let us ask our Blessed Mother Mary to help us appreciate the wonder of baptism, which makes us children of God.

Gospel (Lk 3:15-16, 21-22)

As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ, John

answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Commentary

In Jesus' life, there are many moments in which his actions seem to have no human logic. Why did Jesus, God, choose to assume human nature? Why was he subject to Mary and Joseph all his life? Why did Jesus pray if he himself was God? And, in the case that concerns us in today's Gospel, why does Jesus wish to be baptized? Even John the Baptist tried to dissuade him: "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Mt 3:13) Undoubtedly Jesus did not need to perform any of these

actions – so why does he? Pope Francis answers: "Because he wants to be with the sinners: for this reason he gets in line with them and does the same thing they do." Jesus wanted to give us an example: "it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." (Mt 3:13). He wants to teach us what is best for us.

It is a wonderful reality for us to consider: Jesus has taught us the path we need to follow. He did not do this because he needed it; he did this because we need it. Jesus wanted to come to Earth so that we could be saved and become children of God. His baptism is deeply linked to our baptism. Jesus has taken upon himself what we need. And we are beggars of God's love, the love of our Father God. This is what we celebrate today.

You and I, Pope Francis adds, can also imitate Jesus, reaching down

and taking care of the needs of others. "It is also the way that we can lift up others: not by judging, not by suggesting what to do, but by drawing near, empathizing, sharing God's love," Pope Francis said. We are called to imitate Christ, and a very concrete way is to direct our attention to the needs of others and not so much to our own. We need to go out of ourselves, to remember the needy, those who require our attention, our time, our smile. Let us imitate Christ by raising our eyes to our neighbor. This is the way to true happiness, because there is more happiness in giving than in receiving.

Another of the joyful teachings of the Gospel is that all the baptized are children of God. St. Josemaría wrote: "The Lord, by loving us as his children, has taken us into his house, in the middle of the world, to be members of his family, so that what

is his is ours, and what is ours is his, and to develop that familiarity and confidence which prompts us to ask him, like children, for the moon!" (*Christ Is Passing By*, 64).

It is a great joy for us to meditate upon our condition as children of God: I am a child of God! This truth teaches us to look at the world in a different way. When we are aware of this reality, we see in the others a person of great worth. We do not see if they have one quality or another, if they have a certain skin color, if they have a certain political ideology. When our identity is shaped by the fact that we are children of God, we see that "there is only one race, the race of the children of God. There is only one color, the color of the children of God. And there is only one language, the language which speaks to the heart and to the mind, without the noise of words, making

us know God and love one another." (*Christ Is Passing By*, 106).

Today is a great day to meditate on the gift we received in baptism. The most important thing in my life, the thing that most shapes me as a person, is that I am a child of God. Let us ask our Blessed Mother Mary to make us aware of the wonder of being children of God.

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