Baptism of the Lord (2nd Sunday Ordinary) January 14, 2024

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

Is there a need for Jesus to be baptized? No, there was no need for Jesus to be baptized for he is God's beloved Son, the spotless Lamb of God whom St. John the Baptist will soon proclaim as the One who will take away all sin from fallen humankind. But his purpose in descending into the waters is twofold.

First, he has always submitted to the Law as a true Israelite and now he wishes to humble himself before the eyes of all and receive the baptism of St. John. Like all the rest, he allows them to think of him as a sinner. In reality, he is taking all of humankind with him and plunging it into his Paschal Mystery. The sinless One embodies in himself all humanity, so as to cleanse them from all defilement. The bystanders see Jesus of Nazareth as a sinner like themselves, but in reality, he is the lamb covered with the sins of humanity, though spotless and sinless himself.

But water is not only the symbol of cleansing. It is chiefly the sign of new life. Without water, the life of plants and animals and even man eventually dies. But with water comes life again. Even in the Book of Genesis, the author sees living creatures first emerging from the waters. For him, only creatures with blood were considered living. Jesus descends into the water to sanctify it, as the sacred element which he will designate for the rebirth of all mankind, the sacred sign of Christian baptism. In the waters that Jesus has sanctified, all who accept him will be born anew with a rebirth that is marvelous, making man the very child of God.

Second, in baptism, the child is immersed into a totally new atmosphere, that of the most Blessed Trinity. This is the Christian atmosphere which surrounds and envelops every one reborn in Christ. Again, the Father looks down, and says of the newly baptized Child: "This is my beloved child, my favor rests in him. "Again, the Spirit comes to possess the newly baptized, and dwell in it as in his Holy Temple. He is the Spirit of love and mercy, of gentleness and purity, all of which is symbolized by the image of he dove. Impelled by that Spirit which is the identical Spirit of Jesus, the Christians' aim in life is to spread the fragrance of the Christ's-life, which is that of love and mercy, gentleness and purity of heart.

The feast of the baptism of the Lord ought to re-awaken in us the earnest desire to appreciate our own baptism and carry out faithfully our baptismal commitment. This we can only do with the help of the dwelling Holy Spirit.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**January 16**	**11:00AM**
Maura Bernardino†		Lydia
Nora Ong †		
Wed.	**January 17**	**11:00AM**
Living Memorial		
Thur.	**January 18**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Fri.	**January 19**	**11:00AM**
Special Intentions		
Sat.	**January 20**	**4:30PM**
Special Intentions		
Sun.	**January 21**	**9AM**
Rosario Garcia Yuponce		Buitrago-Cohoon Family
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
People of the Parish		

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