

The Feast Of The Baptism Of The Lord

“In Baptism every Christian personally meets God; he is inserted into the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection and receives a new life, which is the life of God.”

-St. Pope John Paul II

- Fr. Bala Kommathoti

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. With this Feast we conclude the Christmastide. The Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ by John the Baptist in the Jordan River is an important event in Jesus' life and with profound significance. Since it is an important event, on October 16, 2002. St. Pope John Paul II included it in the luminous mysteries. Its importance is characterized by the fact that all the three Evangelists of synoptic Gospels namely Matthew, Mark, and Luke, speak of this striking event. Although there are slight differences in their individual accounts, all of them unanimously agree that the Baptism Of our Lord Jesus marks the beginning of His public ministry.

We may wonder, why did Jesus need to be Baptized by John the Baptist in the first place? We hear that John the baptist tried to prevent him saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and yet you are coming to me?” (Matthew 3:14). In fact Jesus had no sin, He is the second person in the Holy Trinity, He was incarnate, The Word became flesh.

- 1.) Jesus received Baptism to show His unity and solidarity with the human race, which He came to save. He allowed himself to be numbered among sinners.
- 2.) Jesus received Baptism to sanctify the water of Baptism, so that our sins are washed away and we come to a state of Grace in order to follow Him.
- 3.) Jesus received Baptism to show us great humility to follow
- 4.) Jesus received Baptism to show us His authority as God confirmed.

5.) Jesus received Baptism to fulfill all righteousness “Jesus said to him in reply, allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” (Mathew 3:15) For our sake He made Him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

In today's Gospel reading, when Jesus came out of Jordan waters three important things happened, let us go deeper into the Scripture.....

1.) Heaven Opened

Prophet Isaiah laments, “Oh God of Israel, you are a God who lies hidden” (Is 45:15). And the Psalmist prays, “It is your face Oh lord that I seek, hide not your face from me” (Ps 27:8b,9). Elsewhere, again Prophet Isaiah cries out: “Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down” (Is 63:19). And Psalmist again: “Lord God, part the heavens and come down, touch the mountains” (Ps 144:5). But suddenly there is a surprise in the history of Salvation. The heavens open, and God is made visible in the person of Jesus. By this we understand Jesus as the fulfillment of the prayer of Israel.

2.) The Holy Spirit Came Down In The Form Of A Dove

Like the dove that brought the message of hope to Noah after the flood. “ In the evening the dove came back to Him, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! So Noah knew that the waters had diminished on the earth.” (Gen 8:11). When Jesus comes out of the water the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove brings a message of hope to humanity. Jesus is being anointed as King, Priest, and Prophet. Jesus is the messiah the anointed one. St. Peter declares in our 2nd reading of today: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38).

3.) A Voice Was Heard From Heaven

The Heavenly Father declared about Jesus “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.” Jesus was addressed as the 2nd Adam. Jesus was addressed as the new David. And the prophecy of Isaiah (42:1), that we heard in the first reading of today comes true: “Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have sent my spirit upon him....”

What does our own Baptism mean to us?

As St. Pope John Paul II said “In Baptism every Christian personally meets God; He is inserted into the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection and receives a new life, which is the life of God.” What a great gift, what a great responsibility! Yes, it is a great gift because we receive “New Life” from our God. Sometimes we take this precious gift for granted. We don't realize the greatness of this gift, God’s life in us. If we were Baptised as Infants, then we should be grateful to our parents who gifted us with the faith that they had received. They evangelized us. How many of you celebrate your Baptism day? If you don't know it, please find out your Baptism day and celebrate it each year, and be thankful to God For the greatest gift of Baptism that we freely received.

At Christ's Baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; at our Baptism the Trinity took its abode in our soul. At His Baptism, Christ was proclaimed the "Beloved Son" of the Father; at our Baptism we become the adopted sons of God. At Christ's Baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us. At His Baptism Jesus prayed; after our Baptism we must pray to avoid actual sin. As we are celebrating the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, it reminds us of our identity with God. The new life that we receive through Baptism. Let us thank God the Father for the gift of Baptism. Let us appreciate this great gift. Let us thank Jesus for commanding to give this Sacrament. Let us Thank the Holy Spirit for His sanctifying Grace.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I renounce Satan and all my sinful ways that keep me separated from you. I thank you for dying on the cross in order to save me from my sins and with your resurrection you bring me to new life in you. I wish to surrender myself to you and follow you as the Lord of my heart. I ask you to baptize me in the Holy Spirit and in power, that I might follow you more closely and love you more deeply all the days of my life. Let the gifts of the Holy Spirit come alive in me. In your precious name I pray. Amen

Jesus, I Trust In You

