

## Homily on the feast of Baptism of our Lord

[Is 42:1-4, 6-7](#); [Acts 10:34-38](#); [Mk 1:7-11](#)

### **“Your baptism in Christ frees you”**

Dearly Beloved, it is a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate this feast of our Lord’s baptism. Even though Jesus was sinless, he accepted to be baptized so that he would identify with us in our weakness. Also, by his baptism he has sanctified the waters of baptism for all who will come to faith in him and subsequently accept baptism. For all those of us who have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, it’s a reminder of our identity which no one should take for granted. This celebration is a reminder to you at the beginning of the year that you are a child of God. You are not just anybody, but you are special. Therefore, carry yourself as such. Whatever that happens in this year, remember your baptism and what that means.

Last week we celebrated the epiphany of the lord; *God’s revelations of himself and his son to the gentiles*. Today we celebrate another revelation of Jesus as *‘the one pleasing to the Father’*. By following him therefore, we will also please God. If this is not your preoccupation for the year, what would. It is my fervent prayer that your mind will be made up from this time of the year to seek just one thing; following in the steps of our Lord and savior.

As we come to the end of the Christmas season, the reading for this celebrations set out the event one event that ushered Jesus to begin his ministry. Not long ago, we read from St. Matthew concerning the events leading to the birth of Jesus in these words *“angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:20-21)*

At Christmas we celebrated when He was born and named. At baptism we celebrate the purpose *“the because”* of his coming: *“and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins”* We see Jesus beginning his ministry only after his baptism and subsequent testing in the desert. At the heart of his mission is the proclamation of the good news that the kingdom of God is at hand. Christ therefore, as it were, begins the story of God’s rescue plan for enslaved and oppressed humanity by his baptism. We can draw many typologies from the --Old Testament -- exodus rescue experience involving Joseph, Egypt, Moses, Pharaoh, the red sea, etc. *(I would not get into all that this time).*

God's rescue plan is in motion. Do you feel liberated or still feel oppressed by forces in life that you can't get over? You are not living your best life and you know it so well. But you seem not to do anything about it. Another year has begun and like many people you have many good resolutions. You wish to quite procrastination, quite excessive eating, get time to exercise, stop gambling, break free from drug, tobacco, alcohol, pornography and any other form of addiction you struggled with in the past year. Do you see yourself like St. Paul repeating the words; *"For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing."* (Rom 7:18b-19a).

Dear friend, learn to look up to Jesus and caste all these burdens upon him. These addictions have been defeated already. You are no longer that fragile and powerless individual. The life you have now is a life in Christ. By your baptism, you are not only a child of God but also form part of the mystical body of Christ. You share in the inner life of the Trinity.

You also have to be mindful that this life you have receive in Christ through baptism must be sustained; how? The sacraments of the church are the indispensable sustainers of the divine life you have. Without opening yourself daily to the sacraments, you stifle the growth of this new life. The consequences are enormous. You need the eucharist, you need reconciliation, you need anointing and the rest of the sacraments at their proper times. Either than that you will drown and die. The corona virus gives us a perfect excuse not to try to get closer to the sacraments.

God has loved us and given us everything we need to live a victorious life without regrets. Make all the efforts you can and learn to leave the rest to him in faith and trust. All shall be fine.