

January 10, 2021

The Baptism of the Lord

Is 42:1-4, 6-7

or Is 55:1-11

Acts 10:34-38

or 1 Jn 5:1-9

Mk 1:7-11

GROW: Those of us who are parents or godparents remember fondly the day of our child or godchild's baptism. I remember feeling the warmth from the congregation and from extended family and friends as they joined us in welcoming our beloved infant into Christ's Church. The smell of the chrism from the anointing of his head with oil, and the sound of the flowing waters served as visceral reminders of our precious child's birth into new, divine life with Jesus. Today, as we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we give thanks to Jesus, who at his baptism immersed himself into the enormous weight of humanity's sinfulness [while of course remaining sinless himself]. Marking the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus' baptism is the foundation for our own, inviting us to become God's own sons and daughters "in whom he is well pleased." Just as the Spirit descended upon Jesus and anointed him, the Spirit descends on us at our baptism, empowering us to follow Jesus' example and build up the kingdom of God.

GO: Water and oil are two of the symbols of baptism, a third is the white garment [sometimes a bib placed over a small child] worn by the one being baptized. I know of a pastoral associate who embroiders the name and date of baptism on the white garments of every child or infant baptized at her large parish. As we read in the *catechism*, "The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has 'put on Christ,' has risen with Christ." (1243) Gratitude is the proper disposition to thinking about our baptism, and the ones who brought us to it. How might our lives be different, and richer, if each morning, as we dress for the day, we pray in gratitude for the ability, and what it means, to, "put on Christ" in our daily lives?

ACT: Express gratitude. Are your parents and godparents still alive? If so, call them or send a card thanking them for their presence at your baptism, and assure them of your prayers. If they are not alive, perhaps think of one or two people who have been there for you in your life as instruments of God's grace. And then extend your gratitude to them.