



From the Pastor



God Reveals His Son . . .

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord. This brings to an end the season of Christmas, and we begin a few weeks of Ordinary Time of the Liturgical Year, starting Monday. If last Sunday we celebrated the Feast of Epiphany— Christ revealing Himself, particularly to the Gentile world—today we celebrate the feast of Theophany— God revealing His Son on the occasion of His Baptism in the River Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes. Jesus' Baptism is in fact His definitive manifestation as the Messiah or Christ to Israel, and as the Son of the Father to the entire world. The Father's voice from heaven shows that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove shows the Trinitarian nature of the Christian God. The true and unique God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shows Himself in Christ, through Him, with Him, and in Him.

In the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, there is special divine significance. With this feast day, God has come to reclaim us for Himself. Because of original sin, humanity has inherited “a human nature, which has been dislocated from its source of life.” So, God comes to take it to Himself. What Jesus did was to take our human nature and do with it what we could not do—which is to walk it out of death, and that is exactly what He did with His baptism. As it is so linked to the destruction of death and reclaiming of life, the Feast of Theophany is also very closely linked to the Crucifixion. The Feast of Baptism celebrates not only Christ's conquering of sin through baptism, but also God's revelation of Christ as his Son and the beginning of Christ's ministry. The Baptism of the Lord, just like the Nativity, is not just an historical event: it's a revelation.

Many of the incidents that accompanied Christ's baptism are symbolic of what happened at our Baptism. 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 Children 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.

—Fr. Jose Thomas