

## **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord C2025**

After the birth of our Lord Jesus in Bethlehem, his revelation to the magi and the presentation in the temple, he has to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. The Baptism by John the Baptist was an important moment in the life of the Jewish people. The Fathers of the Church have explained that for the first time in their history, the Jewish people became aware of their sins and of the need of repentance, as a result of John's preaching. For that reason all levels of society went to the Jordan to be baptized.

But for our Lord, the baptism was more than a simple ritual of cleansing. By his baptism, our Lord identified himself with his people in need of conversion and change before God. The baptism was also an important moment in the life of our Lord that would reveal his true identity and mark the end of his private life and the beginning of his public ministry.

Our Lord will fulfill that ministry in the line of the prophets of the Old Testament as we heard through the mouth of Isaiah. That is why the first reading recapitulates the mission of the servant of the Lord who is sent to comfort God's people, to speak tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem, and to proclaim a time of expiation of sin.

By his incarnation in the world, our Lord has fulfilled that prophecy of Isaiah by bringing us God's salvation. He has delivered us from lawlessness and cleansed us from our sins so that we become God's people, eager to do what is good. In him God has manifested his mercy toward us and saved us through the bath of baptism and renewed us through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through him, God has saved us so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Our Lord has obtained for us all these graces by his incarnation in the world. However, there is a question. Given that as a Son of God, he was born without human intervention; did our Lord really need to be baptized? For sure, our Lord was sinless. If so, why did he let himself be baptized while John's baptism was for repentance and forgiveness of sins?

These are the questions each one of us should consider if one wants to understand the true identity of our Lord. As a matter of fact, our Lord did not truly need a baptism of repentance of sins for the conversion of heart. He has accepted to be baptized in order to identify himself with us and to give us an example of submission and obedience to the Father.

From hence on, we know that any friendship with God starts with the conversion of heart. By letting himself be baptized, our Lord wants to teach us that no one can belong to God without renouncing his sins. Throughout his ministry, our Lord will insist on the necessity of conversion and the repentance of sin in order to belong to God's Kingdom. Although God's kingdom is a gift, it requires, however, our conversion of heart and our faith in our Lord Jesus.

Plus, by letting himself be baptized, our Lord gives to baptism a new value for himself and for us. In fact, Baptism was for our Lord an opportunity the Father used to reveal his identity to the world. As the Gospel says, at that particular moment, a voice came from heaven and declared: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am pleased”.

In his baptism, our Lord received assurances from heaven about his identity and his mission. By doing so, the Father gives us a certainty that our Lord is his Son he has sent to be our redeemer and the savior of the world. By letting ourselves be baptized like him, we are sanctified and made sons and daughters of God.

That is why in the sacrament of baptism we are cleansed from original sin and introduced into the family of the children of God, which is the Church. Whoever lets himself be baptized receives the forgiveness of his sins and the life of the children of God within him.

The whole picture of our Lord’s baptism teaches us something about the nature of God as a Trinitarian God. The voice that came from heaven and declared, “You are my beloved son”, was that of the Father. The Holy Spirit that descended like a dove upon Jesus was the Spirit of the Father.

Thus, in our Lord’s baptism, God reveals himself more fully to the world than he did with the shepherds or the magi at the birth of our Lord. He reveals his presence as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is for that reason that our Lord has recommended his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

As we celebrate the baptism of our Lord today, let us remember the graces we have received in our own Baptism and renew our baptismal vows. Let us ask Our Lord to make us faithful to our Baptismal promises. May he give us the courage to change our lives, reject Satan and his empty promises, and believe in him as he reveals to us as Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. May he help us live openly the engagements of our baptism! Amen.

**Isiah 40: 1-5, 9-11; Titus 2: 11-14; 3: 4-7; Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22**



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