

January 9 - 10, 2021

Baptism of the Lord

Children of the Father

Festivals of the Christmas Season:

- Nativity
- Holy Family
- Mary Mother of God
- Epiphany
- Baptism of the Lord

At the end of the Christmas Season, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord.

This is because the Baptism of Jesus affirms our own baptism in the following way:

God Created us in his image as we read in Genesis 1: making us beloved creatures of God

God came to earth in our image so we would know we are children of God

Story of Pinocchio and Geppetto

Pinocchio is Geppetto's beloved creature just like what the Bible says at the beginning of Genesis: "We are made in God's image". But this is not the same thing as being a child of God.

Pinocchio looked like, talked like and walked like Geppetto but he was not a boy but a marionette.

What Geppetto longs for his for this creature to become his son. When this happens in the story at its conclusion Pinocchio can now call Geppetto his dad, and Geppetto calls Pinocchio his son.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the celebration of creatures becoming sons and daughters of God.

St Peter in his second letter says that when this happens, we discover what it means to be partakers of the Divine Nature.

Christmas celebrates how Jesus shares in our human nature. The Baptism of the Lord celebrates how through our own baptism we come to share in the Divine Nature:

Collect for Today:

"As the Holy Spirit descended upon him solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be pleasing to you.

Emphasize the Christian understanding that we are children of God:

- Belonging

- Believing
- Behaving

Belonging:

Baptism of Repentance for the Forgiveness of Sins – We can forget who we truly are.... Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.

Oppression:

Temptation that is coming from the outside but weighs heavily on us. We experience a strong drive to do something that we know is damaging to ourselves or to others. The Oppression is seen in Genesis 3 and all the way forward in scripture – Did God really say? I’m I really his son, his daughter.

Temptation can find expression in these various ways:

- Smoking
- Binge drinking
- Stealing
- Lying
- Pornography

The attraction can be oppressive and leads us to forget our true identity as sons and daughters of God.

In the Baptism of Jesus, we discover that in our own baptism we are declared as children of God:

- You are my Son
- **The Beloved**
- With you I am well pleased
- psychologists agree it’s important to hear words that affirm us. Not empty compliments, but heartfelt words of love and appreciation. Such words can help us know that the person speaking to us respects and honors us. Affirmations like these can improve our relationships and solidify our commitment to each other.
- It’s interesting, then, that one of the few times we hear the voice of God in the Scriptures—directly, not through a prophet or vision—comes in today’s Gospel. God the Father tells Jesus, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (Mark

1:11). God was pleased that Jesus was taking this first step in his ministry, and he said so. Right there, in front of John and his disciples, he revealed Jesus' identity and his fatherly love for his Son.

- You need affirmation like that too. Every day. And it's available to you when you pray and worship God. As you acknowledge who he is, you also acknowledge who you are in relation to him. You open your ears to hear what he thinks about you. You begin to understand that you're his beloved child. That he appreciates your efforts to put aside your concerns to follow him.

Believing: From Acts Reading: He is Lord of all

- A Baptism of Repentance
- (Psalm 2) You are my son; today I have begotten you.¹
- (Isaiah). "in whom my soul delights

Behaving:

a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.²

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.³

¹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. (1993). (Ps 2:7). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

² *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. (1993). (Is 42:3–4). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

³ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. (1993). (Is 42:6–7). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

- The people in your life need it as well—and some of them need it from you. It's not about saying something just to make them feel good. It's being alert to opportunities—especially unexpected ones—to point out something that you appreciate about them: their efforts to lead a Bible study. Their patient response to an unkind sibling. Their generosity and kindness. Tell them you are glad they are your brother or sister in Christ. Every time you do, you shine a light on the bigger picture of their lives.⁴

⁴ <https://wau.org/meditations/2021/01/10/180543/>