

JANUARY 12, 2020
Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
Matthew 3: 13-17

JESUS' PURPOSE IS OUR OWN PURPOSE, TOO

On several occasions, in 2013, 2018 and 2019, I've had the privilege of being on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A very memorable and enriching travel. I was with different pilgrims in different years but had inspirational and deep experienced every year. One of the extraordinary moments of my life there was the renewal of baptismal promises and taking our feet in the water in the River Jordan. The water is really refreshing, and you can really feel the coolness of it. For me, as I dipped my feet in the waters, it seems my whole body was invigorating. This was really a moving moment, and one could imagine the Spirit descending, and the Father validating each of us as His sons or daughters. A lot of us, had a sense of renewed commitment and devotion to proclaim how good God is.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. As we know, our Lord's baptism is not the same baptism that we received as Christians. The Lord's baptism is to begin His public ministry compare to John's baptism of repentance.

"Jesus did not need to be baptized. The baptism by John the Baptist was a baptism of repentance, and the sacrament of baptism removes original sin. Since Jesus had neither original sin nor actual sin, he did not need to undergo baptism. However, Jesus also had no need to be born, to suffer, or to die as a man. He did so out of love for humanity. John the Baptist appears to recognize the strangeness of Jesus asking to be baptized (Matt. 3:14) yet obeys Jesus' request. The baptism of Jesus began his public ministry and gave the first example that we are to follow. For if Jesus, who had no need of repentance or cleansing, humbled himself, then we all the more need to humble ourselves. Jesus not only gave the example for us to follow, but many Fathers of the

Church commented that in the baptism of Jesus the sacrament of baptism was born. It was a symbolic action that, though the grace of Christ, was changed into an ontological action. When we receive a sacrament, the grace flows to us from the sacrament, but in the baptism of Jesus the grace of Christ flowed into the sacrament.”¹

My dear sisters and brothers, why the Church places this feast so close to the Feast of the Incarnation, Christmas? There is no need for God to become like us. There was no strict necessity for His incarnation; God could have brought about our salvation in just one click, instantly if he chose to. But Jesus chose to take on human form, underwent Baptism for us to see and feel that He is among us to give us, show us the way to salvation.

My dear sisters and brothers, all of us were baptised and it was the most significant day of our life because that’s the time we became Christians/Catholics. It was the day we were singled out by God, sent us for ministry in the world. We, like Christ, started a ministry, chosen by God to be His instruments to communicate God’s salvation to everyone, everywhere and every time. We don’t need to be big for us to proclaim God’s infinite love. Just be you, humble, small, God-fearing, loving, and caring even if you are colored or have accent in your words – we are all commissioned by God to proclaim His Kingdom here on earth.

According to Pope Francis: “God changed the world through a man born poor in an undistinguished town of a simple woman of faith. We must not be afraid or feel inadequate for such an important mission. Let us remember: God doesn’t choose us for our “bravura,” (means our magnificence, our brilliance, our astounding technical skills, or any sort of excellence) but, in fact, because we are and feel little. God’s decision is clear:

¹ www.catholic.com

to reveal His love He chose a little city and a scorned city, and when He reached Jerusalem, he joined the population of sinners and the rejected.”²

So, do your mission, your task to be proclaimers of God’s infinite love and mercy to others. Live your baptismal promises you made during your baptism. At the end, as we accomplish our purpose, our Father will say to us: “You are my sons and daughters, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, fill me with the fire of your love, strength, and courage to fulfill my baptismal promises, so that I may live my purpose and my mission. May I always find happiness, joy and delight in seeking to please you, to do your will just as you pleased your Father and did His will. Use me to be Your presence in the world. Amen."

² zenit.org