

The Baptism of the Lord 2020

Today, on the feast of the Baptism of our Lord, I would like to talk about Baptism. First of all, the word we use, Sacrament, has its origin in the Roman Legion. It was the oath of fidelity that the legionary swore to the Emperor of Roman. This oath bound that legionary to death in the service of Rome. We use this word to describe sacraments because when we enter into a sacrament, we enter into a binding relationship or covenant.

The second thing to understand is how the sacraments work. They work by the very fact that they have been done. So, if the right words are used and the right things are used and the person has the power to do them, then the sacrament is valid. It is Christ who makes the sacraments work. This is to give us no doubt about whether a sacrament is valid.

The very important thing about the sacraments is that they change our lives by how much we are open to them changing our lives. That is why people who have received the sacraments are not necessarily better. We have to invite the change into our lives and we will talk a bit more about how we can use the graces in our lives. We have to invite the power of the graces if we want them to work.

I don't know if you have been privileged to see the short movie, "Behind the Veil." It is about a person who goes to Mass and finds the heavenly aspects of Mass unveiled. What if we were to unveil the mysteries of Baptism? If we were able to see what happens behind the sacrament? In the Gospel today we have that unveiling. By watching what happens when Jesus is baptized, we see what happens to us as well.

We must remember that the signs in Baptism are not merely nice symbols that are cute like many other types of ceremonies. The signs in the sacrament effect heavenly realities that are waiting to be utilized by us.

The first one is an identity as related to the Gospel. *You are my son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased.* This is what starts the great significance of Baptism, this new and exciting identity. I saw a shirt one time that said, "If you could be anyone be Superman, unless you are Superman then be yourself." So who are you o baptized soul? A son or daughter of God in whom the Father is well pleased. That is a truth that is declared. Think of this veil lifted that when you were baptized the Father called all of Heaven together, sat you in the middle of everyone, and said, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased. I have no shame in my child." Then imagine God the Father beaming at you. How do we know this? Because Jesus did not need to get baptized for his sake, he was baptized for our sake. He took on our flesh to elevate it and show us the Father delighting in us. What if we were to live this identity of a son or daughter of God, how great our lives would be?

I may have told you this already, but the world wants us to be uncertain of our identity. Insecure people are easy to manipulate for all kinds of purposes. There was a saint who, in her early days, was quite mean to the servants. One of the servants told her, "I am the daughter of God and you cannot treat me that way." It was a life changing moment for the future saint. Ladies, the world knows where you feel weak and vulnerable and they want to exploit it so they can make money

from you. They want to sell you your beauty and make your worth, your influence to be in relation to others. But that is not true because God has said something different. He has said: *You are my daughter. You are unique and wonderful and you image me, who is the source of all beauty, and, of course, you are not beautiful like all other woman, you are uniquely beautiful and you have a unique influence and in no other person in the world has this aspect of my beauty been seen. Come to me, don't look at the mirror. Look at Me and I will show you that you are beloved and radiate my image like no one else. Each time you walk into a church, I want to remind you of who you are, a daughter of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Do not take yourself lightly.*

To His sons he says: *You are my son, the beloved, in whom I am well pleased. You are a man among men and I made you in a special and unique way so don't compare yourself with others. You image me in a way that no one else will or has ever imaged me. You have what it takes my son. I equip all my sons with what they need to fulfill the great task that I have made them for. You do not need to prove yourself, you simply need to know yourself and you will know it by looking at me and knowing me. In knowing me, you will know your place and how your special gifts bring life to the world like no one else could bring life to the world. Ask me each time you come into a church.*

That is the first veil that Baptism hides.

The Church puts the font as we enter into the church to remind us of this holy event and also to help us use the graces that are waiting to be used.