

Baptism of the Lord (A)
January 9, 2011

At Christmas, Jesus was born human – he lowered himself and became like us in all things except sin.

Today, Jesus is reborn “Sacramentally” in baptism.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus went to the Jordan River and insisted that John baptize him so that he, the Son of God, could be washed clean and consecrated in the waters.

But, this doesn't quite make sense, does it?

I mean, how can Jesus be washed clean and consecrated?

In other words, how can Jesus be made holy?

Baptism, as we know it, washes our sins away, makes us clean, and brings us into communion with God.

In other words, Baptism makes us holy.

But, how can we say this same effect happened for Jesus, the Son of God, who was already without sin and is the epitome of all holiness?

Well, by faith and reason, we must conclude then that Christ was not made holy by Jordan's waters.

Rather, it was Christ who made the waters holy and continues to purify water by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

And so, water now, especially when used for dispensing baptismal grace, is made clean, purified from all traces of evil and sin, because Jesus made it so.

Now, this being said, we need to stop here and ask ourselves: As disciples – baptized in the Paschal Mystery, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – how are we being made holy as the waters were made holy by Jesus?

In other words, how are we being made clean, pure, and brought closer into God friendship?

This, of course, is no easy question, nor does it have an easy answer. But, perhaps we can start by asking ourselves a few questions:

- How did we spend Christmas Day, the Sunday after Christmas, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, the entire Christmas Season and so forth?
- How do we treat our family and friends?
- How do we greet our neighbors on the street, at the marketplace, and at work?
- How is our prayer life developing with God?
- How are we truly living out our individual vocations in life – whether they be married life, single, or consecrated religious life?
- How are we responding to God's invitation to grow in grace, intimacy, and holiness?

As we reflect on these questions, if we find that we're not doing so hot right now, that's O.K. In fact, I'll be the first to admit that I'm not always doing the things I know I should be doing.

But, like I said, that's alright because we can't grow until we recognize and name our weaknesses and faults.

When we do, then, we are called to offer them up to the Lord.

And once we do this, we should find comfort knowing that God's invitation will still be there for us.

That's right...it doesn't expire like the milk in our refrigerator. It's always available to us.

And so, may we have the courage to do a thorough examine of conscience so that we may better respond to God's invitation and thus, be made holy.