

First Reading – Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7: The Lord's chosen servant will bring justice quietly and gently. He will be a light to the nations, opening blind eyes and freeing prisoners.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 29: Give glory to the Lord, whose powerful and majestic voice is over the waters. He is king forever and will bless his people with peace.

Second Reading – Acts 10:34-38: Peter tells Cornelius and his guests that God accepts anyone who respects Him and does good, mentioning Jesus' message of peace and healing.

Gospel – Matthew 3:13-17: Jesus gets baptized by John, despite John's initial hesitation. As Jesus emerges from the water, the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends, and God declares Jesus as His beloved Son.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Today, we commemorate the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, his baptism by John the Baptist. What can we concentrate about Jesus / Messiah? And to our call, vocation, mission too?

(1) Jesus is God's servant; So are we. As Jesus came into this world not to do his own will but to do the will of his Father. We must say that too, which is to become a saint.

(2) that God “uphold” him; Faith tells us God is still here holding us up. How can we be so sure that God is not going to let you slip through his fingers? Because, I am and you are one of his fingers.

(3) that God has “chosen him; Jesus is chosen by the Father to come into the world to die and to rise to save us. His whole life is a mission. So is ours. We choose to believe in God. God chose us to choose him.

(4) that God is “pleased” with his Son; and with us too insofar as we believe him, hope in him and love him, and therefore, obey him.

(5) that God “put spirit on” him; God has put his own Spirit on Jesus. At the Annunciation, at Jesus' conception, it was the Holy Spirit, not Joseph, who caused Mary to conceive Jesus in her womb; at our own baptism, it was the Holy Spirit caused that new, immortal life from God – to be born in our souls. As Mary is the perfect daughter of the Father, the perfect mother of the Son, the perfect of the perfect spouse of the Holy Spirit. We are God's children and spiritual spouses of God's Holy Spirit, who impregnates our souls with supernatural life. We are all female spiritually and always call God “he”, not “she”. We do not impregnate him with ours.

(6) that he “shall bring forth justice to the nations” and “establish “justice on the earth, that “God has called him to “the victory of justice,” not just to the ideal of justice; Like Jesus, we too bring justice, righteousness, goodness, holiness to the nations (the whole Gentile world). Like Fire, it can't help spreading the fire of God's love by being who we are: God's kids with God's love and joy – peace in us.

(7) that he will “not make his voice heard in the street,” not making a big noise like a 20 foot big wave; just loving as the unstoppable tide. Metaphorically speaking, *we can't escape the smiles of a saint.*

(8) **that he will treat us tenderly**, that “a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench”; Jesus/God won’t give up on us and he won’t give us more than we can handle.

(9) **that God has “grasped him by the hand” and “set him as a covenant of the people”**; Jesus Christ’s work is to be the bridge between God and man, our work is to be bridges between others and Jesus.

(10) **that he will be “a light for the nations, “ a light that will “open the eyes of the blind**; Jesus will liberate us from prison. What prison? Darkness. He will open eyes of the blind. Without Jesus we are blind, ignorant about who is God, who we are, what is our relationship to God?

(11) **that he will “bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.”** The Good News is, not fear and guilt but love and trust. Sin makes the worst prison for one’s self. All eleven of these prophecies apply to Jesus. But they also apply to us if we are members of His Mystical Body, which is what his Church is.

The Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ at the Jordan symbolically marks the beginning of His ministry of bringing all of us, the lost sheep and flock of God back to Him, because Christ is our Good Shepherd, who has come into this world to seek for us and to gather all of us back into God’s loving embrace. He has gathered all of us, and shares with us our human existence and life, so that, by also sharing our common Baptism, He may lead us all through the waters of death and rebirth, just the way the people of Israel went through the Red Sea, walking through the water, from their slavery in Egypt and the desolation they had there, into the freedom that God had promised them, and the promise of happiness and joy in the Promised Land that God had promised them and their forefathers.

The reason why we remember our baptism is also not just so that we recall what we have promised, but also a reminder that we have to continue carrying on the way of life that is expected of us as baptized Catholics, as members of the Lord’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Baptism is not the end of our journey as Christians, especially for those of us who went through the process of initiation into the Christian faith through a period of discernment and catechumenate, and it is not the pinnacle of our Christian journey. Rather, baptism marks that new beginning in our lives in which we have begun a new path of life and existence, dedicating it all to Christ, and striving our best to follow Him in our path of life. Just as the Baptism that the Lord Jesus experienced at the Jordan began His ministry formally, our own baptism should be the point marking the new beginning of our lives.

It means that we are all called towards a better and holier existence, one that is more attuned to the Lord and to His ways and His truth. We are all called to answer God’s call in our lives, making good use of whatever provisions and gifts, blessings, and graces that He has given to each one of us. The Lord has given us all His blessings, graces, various talents, and abilities so that we may make good use of them for the benefit of others, our fellow brothers, and sisters all around us.

Therefore, as we rejoice today in this Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, let us all spend some time to reflect on whether we have been truly faithful to God in our actions and deeds, in our way of life and believing in Him. Let

us all strive to draw ever closer to God and to remain firmly committed to walk the path towards His salvation and grace, fulfilling and ever being mindful of our baptismal promises.

May the Lord, by Whose Baptism we have been saved, through His suffering and death on the Cross, and by His glorious Resurrection, empower us and strengthen us that we may always ever be faithful to Him, now and always.

Lord Jesus, on this day of the Feast of your Baptism, grant us a deeper awareness of our Christian vocation, so that we may live worthy of being children of God. Amen.