

# THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord closes the Christmas season and invites us to consider what it means to live as beloved sons and daughters of God. For adult children of dysfunctional homes, the idea of being ‘beloved’ may not come easily. Many of us grew up with distorted messages about love, identity, and worth. We may have internalized shame, self-reliance, or perfectionism in order to survive. But the baptism of Jesus shows us a new model of identity—one rooted in the Father’s love, not our performance or upbringing.

The gospel tells us that as Jesus came up from the water, the heavens opened and the Spirit descended like a dove. A voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Before Jesus had preached a sermon, healed the sick, or gone to the cross, He was already claimed, affirmed, and delighted in. This identity grounded Him for the mission ahead. And it is this same identity that God desires to offer each of us.

For many adult children, recovery begins with the recognition that our past—though painful—does not define our future. We may have inherited patterns of dysfunction, secrecy, control, or neglect, but through the Twelve Steps and the sacraments, we are invited into healing. Like baptism, recovery marks a beginning. It is a process of turning toward light, grace, and truth.

One of the challenges in recovery is learning to hear the voice of truth over the echoes of the past. Voices that said, ‘You’re not enough,’ or ‘You have to earn love,’ or ‘Keep everything together at all costs’ can still ring in our hearts. But God’s voice interrupts that noise with something much better: ‘You are my child. I am pleased with you. You are not alone.’

This healing isn’t just emotional—it’s spiritual. Step Two reminds us that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. That power is not distant or indifferent. It is the same power that hovered over the waters at creation, that descended at Jesus’ baptism, and that now lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

As we journey through recovery, we begin to see our stories in a new light. The wounds of our past don’t disappear, but they are transformed. We begin to recognize the gifts we’ve been given—resilience, empathy, spiritual depth—and we offer them in service to others. Our true family becomes those who walk with us in grace, accountability, and healing.

This feast also invites us to reflect on what it means to belong. In dysfunctional homes, we may have felt like outsiders, caretakers, or scapegoats. In the family of God, we are sons and daughters—beloved, accepted, and called. We don’t have to perform or prove anything. We are invited to rest in our identity and take the next indicated step with trust and humility.

Let this feast be a reminder that your story is still unfolding. The God who claimed you in baptism is still speaking today. He is pleased with your willingness, your courage, and your desire for healing. You are not defined by your past—you are being renewed, one day at a time, through love that never fails.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What parts of your identity are being reshaped in recovery?
- How do you experience God’s love and voice in contrast to the messages of your upbringing?
- What does it mean for you to belong to the family of God, especially in light of your family of origin?

## MASS READINGS

**FIRST READING** Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

**SECOND READING** Acts 10:34-38

**GOSPEL** Matthew 3:13-17