

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes the Christmas season and ushers in a new phase in Jesus' life—the start of His public ministry. For those of us with loved ones affected by addiction, this moment serves as a spiritual marker for our own journey. Like Christ stepping into the waters, we, too, are called to surrender, to trust, and to allow God to lead us forward, one day at a time.

In this Sunday's gospel, Jesus approaches John the Baptist with a request that confuses him. John protests, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" But Jesus insists, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." John agrees, and what happens next is transformative—not just for Jesus, but for all who witness this act of divine humility.

As Jesus comes up from the waters of the Jordan, the heavens are opened. The Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17) This is the Father's affirmation, His declaration of identity and love.

For families and friends of those struggling with addiction, the baptism of Jesus is a powerful reminder that our truest identity and our loved one's identity is found in being beloved children of God. The pain, fear,

or resentment we may carry does not define us. Nor does the behavior of our addicted loved ones define them. God's mercy can penetrate every broken place.

Our spiritual recovery journey often begins with a similar act of humility. We come to realize that we are not in control and that our efforts to fix, manage, or manipulate situations have brought pain. When we step back and allow God to work, we begin to witness real transformation.

Like Jesus emerging from the Jordan, we come to a new understanding of ourselves and our place in God's plan. We are not meant to carry this burden alone. We are invited to let go, to receive healing, and to support one another in love and honesty. The principles of recovery help us practice boundaries, prayer, and healthy detachment—all rooted in the truth that God is God and we are not.

When we embrace our powerlessness and turn our will over to God, new life emerges. We begin to see our loved ones with compassion, rather than control. We trust that God is at work in them and in us. The baptismal waters that once symbolized cleansing now become a wellspring of peace and spiritual growth.

This week, let us remember that each step toward recovery—each choice to pause, pray, and let go—is a reflection of Christ's own willingness to trust the Father.

We may not have all the answers, but we are not alone. God continues to speak: "You are my beloved." Let that truth shape how we live and love today.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How have you experienced a turning point or spiritual beginning in your own recovery journey?

- In what ways can you practice trusting God with your loved one's healing this week?

- What helps you remember that you—and your loved one—are beloved children of God?

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