

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord brings the Christmas season to a close and marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. We move from the quiet awe of the nativity into action—into witness, surrender, and spiritual purpose. For those of us in recovery from addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments, this feast reminds us of our own turning points: moments when we stepped out of isolation and darkness into new life through humility, community, and the grace of God.

This Sunday's gospel recounts a powerful and formative moment in Christ's life. After traveling from Galilee to the Jordan, Jesus approaches John the Baptist with a request that surprises him: to be baptized. John resists, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" But Jesus replies, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:14-15).

John relents, and as Jesus rises from the waters, the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the voice of the Father declares, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). It is in this moment that Jesus is revealed as the anointed One, and His mission begins.

This scene has deep significance for those of us in recovery. Though Jesus is sinless, He submits to baptism as a public act of humility and solidarity with humanity. He enters into the waters not for His sake, but for ours. In doing so, He sanctifies the act of

surrender—the very principle we practice when we admit we are powerless and turn our will and our lives over to the care of God.

In recovery, baptism echoes the beginning of our new life. Many of us come to recovery feeling lost, ashamed, or unworthy. But like Jesus in the Jordan, we are met by the Holy Spirit and reminded of who we truly are: beloved children of God. It is not our perfection but our willingness that pleases the Lord.

The beginning of Jesus' public ministry mirrors what happens when we begin to live out the principles of the Twelve Steps. We become witnesses to God's power, sharing our experience, strength, and hope with others who still suffer. Our faith takes on flesh as we make amends, extend compassion, and participate in a new way of life.

God's voice still speaks: "You are my beloved." This is the identity we claim—not one shaped by addiction or the wreckage of the past, but one rooted in God's mercy. When we live from this place of truth, our spiritual awakening continues, and our lives become a channel of grace for others.

The waters of baptism symbolize both death and new life. In recovery, we die to the old patterns that kept us bound and rise with the hope that comes from God. We are not alone. As we work the Steps and lean on our fellowship, we remember that God continues to reveal Himself through our actions, our service, and our surrender.

Let us take time this week to reflect on the grace of our own beginning—when we said yes to recovery, yes to God, and yes to being made new.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does the baptism of Jesus reveal to you about your own beginning in recovery?

- How do you relate to the idea of dying to an old way of life and rising to new life in Christ?

- In what ways is God calling you to live as His beloved child this week?

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