

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

(Jan. 12/13, 2019)

Welcome as we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. In celebrating His Baptism, we are by association celebrating our own baptism also that day when we were immersed into the life and the mystery of Christ Jesus Himself ! This action joined us together with Him in a special way we were baptized with water in the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Some interesting things happened on that day How many of you remember anything about it Yea ! As lifelong Catholics most of us have no memories or recollections of that day ! We were infants, and our parents and godparents brought us to the church on that designated day, we were baptized, or Christened, as we sometimes like to say, (that means we put on Christ, on that day) !

The ceremony itself was rather cool !

The priest welcomed your parents and godparents, and others who had gathered to celebrate the special occasion. Then to begin the ceremony, to get the ball rolling, the priest asked your parents “What name have you given this child”? Your parents responded giving your full name this would be the name you are known by amidst your family and friends now a very important little detail is that this is the name you would be known by, by God, and in His community of the Church.

The Church had requested that you be given a Christian name, the name of a saint being preferable, since it was a celebration of your being immersed into Christ Jesus. Being named at the beginning of the ceremony was extremely important, because it denoted that

you were being claimed by the Church in the name of Jesus, and a specific name for you in relationship with God was very important. Naming a Child in the ancient history of the Jewish people was extremely important because it denoted responsibility for that child, and a promise of care for that child until he/she was able to care for themselves.

In the Hebrew history, we read in the scriptures that on the eighth day, the child was brought to the Temple to perform the customary ritual of the law an essential part of that ritual was naming the child. If per chance the father had died, or was gone away, or no longer available, the ritual called for the mother to pass the child to the one who was going to NAME that child, that one now accepted paternal responsibility, that one was now Father (naturally had been planned ahead of time and agreed upon). We see this action in both the opening of the Old Testament, and the New Testament. God gives Abram a new name, Abraham, Jesus gives Simon a new name “You will be Cephas,.....rendered Peter” !!!!

The Presider then asks the parents and godparents to renew their own Baptismal promises, and they are speaking on behalf of the infantpromising to do all in their power to raise up the child in they ways of God, to teach and instruct, and learn the child in the ways of Christ. The infant is then Baptized in Water in the name of the Father, The Son and The Holy SpiritThe child will be given an opportunity to make their own declaration of Faith at an appropriate time later in their own livesWe call thatSacrament of Confirmation !

After the naming, and the Profession of Faith, and Baptism, the infant is anointed with oil ! Just as an athlete has oil smeared across their body, in preparation for a race, so that they may be

loosened up, and be enduring throughout the race, so the oil is smeared on the infant the presider says : “God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the Chrism of Salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of His body, sharing everlasting life.”

Notice the words — The Priest, Prophet, and Kingly, roles !
We are each anointed unto those three special roles ! We are called to be a part of:

The Priestly Role of Jesus as the High Priest

The Prophetic Role of Jesus, (Proclaiming the presence of His Kingdom here on earth)

And The Kingly Role of Jesus WE are called to live as sons and daughters of the King !

How are we doing in living out those roles ?? Big question !! It is very challenging in our world today to keep all of that before us !

There are two more more rituals in the service

1. The infant is clothed in a White Garment a symbol of being cleansed from Original Sin and set free to live in Christ Jesus.
2. The lighting of the Candle a candle for the one being baptized is lit from the Easter Candle or Christ Candle. It is an acknowledgement that this individual is now beginning a new life in the power of Christ Jesus. And there is a pledge that I will continue working on growing my relationship with Jesus for the rest of my life.

Today let us celebrate again the Grace of our Baptism and claim for ourselves the power He offers us in this Sacrament to be wide open to that Holy Spirit — the gift He offers us so that we may live in His Way ! Instead of our formal profession of Faith let us renew our Baptismal Promises and let us choose to be really grateful for those who brought us to the Waters of Baptism to begin with and come forward to dip your hand in the Holy Water and bless yourself in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit !

—Fr. Gerry