

The Baptism of the Lord:

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Today's feast invites us to pause, and to remember who Jesus is, and through Him, who we are. The readings remind us that Baptism is not just a moment from the past, but a call that shapes our identity and our mission today.

A young boy once asked an old priest during a Baptism ceremony, "What changes after the water is poured?" The old priest replied, "Nothing you can see immediately, but everything that truly matters."

That simple answer captures the deep meaning of Baptism that today's Gospel invites us to reflect on. The baptism of Jesus is not about repentance from sins. It is about identity, mission, and belonging. By choosing to be baptized, Jesus steps fully into human life: He does not remain distant or separate, but enters the same waters as everyone else. Baptism becomes a sign of solidarity: God choosing to stand with humanity, especially with those who feel broken, guilty, or unworthy. At the heart of Baptism is identity.

When the voice from Heaven declares Jesus as the beloved Son, it reveals a truth that applies to all who are baptized. Baptism tells us who we are before it tells us what we must do. We are not defined first by our successes, failures, or social roles, but by God's love. In this world that measures worth by performance and approval, Baptism reminds us that we are already accepted and loved.

Baptism is also about God's presence: the descent of the Spirit shows that Baptism is not just a symbolic washing, but an encounter with God, who dwells within us. The Spirit empowers, guides, and strengthens us for the challenges of life. We are never sent alone: God walks with us.

At the same time, Baptism is a calling: just as Jesus emerges from the waters ready to serve, heal, and proclaim God's kingdom, our Baptism commits us to live differently. It calls us to choose justice over indifference, compassion over judgment, and service over selfishness.

Baptism is not a private event: it is a public commitment to reflect Christ in the world. And finally, Baptism gives us hope: even when we fail, even when life becomes messy, Baptism assures us that God does not withdraw His love from us.

The water reminds us that God continues to cleanse us, renew us, and call us again. The Baptism of the Lord invites us to remember our own Baptism: not as a past ritual, but as a living reality that shapes who we are and how we live each day. We are baptized not for comfort, but for service, chosen by God to be light and hope in the lives of others.

May God bless us all