

Homily Baptism of the Lord - 2008

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My sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today we celebrate the baptism of Jesus by John in the waters of the Jordan. We contemplate the action of the Blessed Trinity at the beginning of Jesus' public life. "This is the manifestation ('Epiphany') of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Son of God" (CCC, 535).

Celebramos el Bautismo del Señor en las aguas del Jordán de manos de San Juan Bautista. Contemplamos la acción de la Santísima Trinidad al inicio de la Vida Pública de Jesús. Dios Padre declara que Jesús es Su Hijo amado, predilecto y el Espíritu Santo también está presente en la forma de paloma posándose sobre Jesús.

The first reading of today's mass from the Prophet Isaiah, reminds us that Jesus was to bring to perfect realization the Old Testament virtue of justice, namely, the acceptance of God's Holy Will: "Thus says the Lord: here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased... he shall bring forth justice to the nations ... I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness"

In the second reading the Acts of the Apostles have St. Peter's words about Jesus' life and mission: "... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him"

It was in being baptized by John, today's passage of the Gospel, that Jesus expresses his willingness to respond to and accept his Father's will and mission for him.

Precisamente en el Bautismo, Jesús acepta la misión que Dios Padre le ha encargado. Su bautismo marca el inicio de un mundo nuevo, una nueva creación. Cristo se ha convertido en la fuente desde la cual Dios derrama su Espíritu sin distinción sobre israelitas y gentiles (cf. Hch 10,45). En el Bautismo, todos somos ungidos con el mismo Espíritu y somos constituidos *hijos e hijas amados* de Dios. Efectivamente, somos *cristianos*, lo que literalmente significa "ungidos".

This special event in the life of Jesus prompts us to reflect on our own baptism and its significance for our lives. To be baptized means to be *born again*. It is a new birth –birth by water and the Spirit, a birth which introduces us into a new life. Through our baptism we share the life of Jesus Christ –a life of intimacy with the divine family of the Trinity.

Today, as we consider the beginning of Jesus' public life we have to think of our own mission in life. As followers of Christ, we are called to be a light to nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

Como Católicos, seguidores de Jesús, todos hemos recibido como los Apóstoles la misión de extender el Reino de Dios entre los hombres. Como nos recuerda el Concilio Vaticano II: “La Iglesia ha nacido con el fin de que, por la propagación del Reino de Cristo en toda la tierra, para gloria de Dios Padre, todos los hombres sean partícipes de la redención salvadora, y por su medio se ordene realmente todo el mundo hacia Cristo” (AA. 2).

Estamos llamados a llevar la vida y las enseñanzas de Jesús a nuestros semejantes. Todos tenemos una llamada personal a seguir a Jesús y a proclamar el Evangelio. Es una vocación misionera siguiendo el ejemplo de Jesús, dando buen ejemplo, respetando la libertad de los demás y ofreciéndoles nuestra amistad y caridad fraterna.

I am sure that we all have the desire to participate in the evangelizing mission of Christ. We are already doing it. We don't always know the consequences of our action. We may never know all the good we have done in our lives. There have been countless times when our care and concern for others have made a tremendous difference in people's lives. But we can always renew our zeal, our desire to communicate, to share this "great news" of our faith with others.

Esta Semana también celebramos la Semana de las Vocaciones. Cada año tenemos la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre nuestra vocación personal y renovar nuestras oraciones por vocaciones al sacerdocio y a la vida consagrada.

Como decía el Papa Juan Pablo II: "¡No olvidéis, además, que hoy también se necesitan sacerdotes santos, personas totalmente consagradas al servicio de Dios!"

Hoy en día, Dios continúa llamando a cada persona a participar en la construcción de Su Reino. Es cierto que es más difícil que Su voz llegue al corazón de las personas en un mundo que define la vida en términos de éxito material y placer personal. Por eso necesitamos rezar más y animar a los jóvenes a que se acerquen a Jesús; escuchen su llamada y respondan positivamente.

As we celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week, we remember the words of Pope Benedict XVI, on the 2006 World Day of Prayer for Vocations: “We readily recognize the need to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life. It is not surprising that, where people pray fervently, vocations flourish. The holiness of the Church depends essentially on union with Christ and on being open to the mystery of grace that operates in the hearts of believers.”

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord it's a day to celebrate our own baptism, a time to renew our enthusiasm in living our Christian call to imitate the life and mission of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

We are called to participate in the New Evangelization of the World. It means to help other people to get closer to God. We are instruments in the hands of God. We have to look for new ways to communicate the Gospel to the people of our time.

Let's keep in mind the words of Pope John Paul II: “Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a immense ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ... The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians...” NMI, 58

Recemos para que, por la intercesión de María, nuestra Santa Madre, Dios nos conceda un gran entusiasmo en la evangelización y muchas más vocaciones al sacerdocio y a la vida consagrada y que cada familia y parroquia sean lugares donde todos podamos alentar a los jóvenes de hoy a escuchar y seguir el llamado del Señor Jesús Amén.