

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
Mass and Baptisms at San Fernando Cathedral, January 12, 2020

On this last day of the Christmas season, we celebrate our Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River. This event in his life marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in the world. After his baptism Jesus begins his life of service, teaching, preaching, and healing. The beautiful miracle that occurred as our Lord came up out of the water enabled Jesus to follow the way that had been marked out for him in his life as the Savior.

The Lord submitted himself to baptism "to fulfill all righteousness." (Mt) Jesus did not need to be cleansed by the waters of baptism, but he entered the waters anyway so he could initiate the new covenant in himself. As he came out of the water, the skies opened, and the voice of the Father was heard. What beautiful words the Father spoke to his Son, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mk) The Father made his love for the Son known to the world, but also called his Son to his public ministry, for which he was born into this world.

The Father has called us to live in a covenant with him through the baptism initiated by Christ. When we emerge from the water we belong to the Father, he speaks to us as he spoke to his Son, Jesus: "You are my beloved children; in you I am well pleased." How great a

blessing is it that we are now called the daughters and sons of God! Just as Jesus was called to his vocation by the Father at his baptism, so are we. Each of us has been called by the Father to a purpose in this life and are sent forth to fulfill this purpose, to promote the dignity of the life of those around us, including those we refuse to see and those who are not allowed to live.

However, we do not go alone. At our Lord's baptism the Holy Spirit came to him and rested upon him. The Spirit empowered Jesus. The Spirit is the fire that shines within us. We draw our strength from the Spirit as we follow the call of the Father, just as our Lord did in his life. Do not be afraid. The Holy Spirit lives in you, by virtue of your baptism. Because of this you have what you need to do the Father's will, which is laid out in his commandments and exemplified by Jesus, and you are called to live the same life with courage and joy! The courage and joy that comes from knowing that your Father God loves you and is proud of what he has accomplished in you.

Maybe the skies did not open up on the day of your baptism as they did at the Baptism of the Lord, but heaven did bend down to meet you. We have become the daughters and sons of the Father, heirs to the life of the Son, and temples of the Holy Spirit. Trust in the Lord always, and rejoice that you have been called for a purpose and sent out to help build the Kingdom of God. Remember the words of the Father today: "You are my beloved; in you I am well pleased."