

## Reflection for the Baptism of the Lord

The baptism of the Jesus by John the Baptist is a major event in the world, which is described in the three synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Most biblical scholars have determined Al-Maghtas, which is located in Jordan to be the place on the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized. It is after the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist that Jesus the Messiah begins His 3 years of ministry. John the Baptist the last of the prophets came into the world with one purpose and that was to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ. The final Prophet that prepared the world for the coming of the Savior, informed people that they needed to repent and reform their lives. John the Baptist was not focused on external preparation but rather he was focused on an internal preparation. This final Prophet was focused on the hearts of men and women of his day and informing them that in order for them to be ready for the coming of the Messiah their hearts needed to be cleansed and made open for the coming of the one who was promised.

John the Baptist did practice a baptism of repentance, as part of the people of God preparing for the coming of the Messiah. John knew that the Christ was at hand and he was not worthy to untie His sandal strap. The last Prophet also knew that his baptism was a baptism of repentance, and that the Messiah, who was coming after him, would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist knew that his work, his ministry only made sense in context, the prophets that came before John the Baptist and the Messiah who came after him enabled his ministry to make sense and to bear fruit. The ministry of John the Baptist is wholly dependent on the Messiah. The Messiah and His ministry in this world is independent of John the Baptist. The last of the Prophets knew that his ministry and the purpose of his life was dependent on the Messiah.

You and I are similar to John the Baptist as we chose to follow Christ in this world, we become dependent on the Messiah. As followers of Christ, who take up our crosses every day and chose to follow our Savior, we are dependent on Him. Our purpose for being is all focused on our relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is through our relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we find purpose and meaning in this world. It is in the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist that the world is formally informed that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of the World. *“On coming up out of the water He saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”* These two preceding sentences are taken from our Gospel reading this Sunday, the Gospel of Mark, and they speak of a moment when the Holy Trinity is present, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This moment at the Baptism of our Lord, when the Holy Trinity is visible to all present might help explain how the early Church was able to easily embrace Baptism as the first Sacrament of Initiation and as one of the seven Sacraments of the Church.

In the Gospels of Luke and Mark the voice of God is stated as saying *“You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,”* and the Gospel of Matthew, has the voice of God stating, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Clearly all three Gospels record the voice of God the Father informing all who will listen, who Jesus is, and that God the Creator of the universe is pleased with His only Son. This is an important and pivotal moment in the salvific history of humanity. God the Father, the creator of all that is, has just informed the world that the long-awaited Savior, the Messiah, the Christ, has arrived. Our Gospel reading this Sunday ends with the statement of God the Father being well pleased with His Son. This shows the personal relationship that God the Father and God the Son have with each other, but it also shows that the Son of God, the Messiah is following His calling and is engaged in His ministry here in this world. The Baptism of Jesus is a part of His ministry in this world for it is through the baptismal waters that we come to

know who Jesus is, not just His baptism but our baptism also. In closing the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord reminds us of the portal that the Sacrament of Baptism is for each one of use. This Sacrament provides us with the starting point in our Christian, Catholic journey. It is in this sacrament we are born again in Christ through the Baptismal waters. It is also in this first Sacrament that we receive, we are reminded that we have a triune God. We are invited to have a relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.