

Commentary to the Second Sunday of Epiphany: The Baptism of the Lord

The Baptism of the Lord. Our Humanity Made Holy



This week we end the Christmas Season with the second Epiphany of the Lord, His Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist. The Baptism of the Lord is an epiphany because it is a demonstration to the world that this Jesus is the Son of the God. Some spiritual writers say that through the holiness of his humanity, our humanity was also made holy.

The second epiphany occurred while John the Baptist was baptizing people with his baptism of repentance. John's baptism flowed from his preaching. He told people that longed for a new world that the new world was at hand. He challenged them to begin to change this world by changing their own lives. He called them to make a symbolic sign of this change by being baptized. This would be very similar to an evangelist calling people to change their lives and stand up for the Lord.

Jesus hears John's preaching and is very much aware of the world's longing for change. He allows John to baptize Him, even against John's objections, because he also longs for a change in the world. He is one with all seeking the Kingdom of God.

It is at this point that the Epiphany occurs. The Lord is shown to the world to be the Son of God. The voice from heaven echoes the first reading from Isaiah, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit descends upon the Lord in the form of a dove. The world witnesses the beginning of Jesus' public life.

"This is my Beloved Son." The importance of this epiphany lies in the words of the Father. Jesus and Jesus alone is our teacher. In a world full of gurus, dynamic preachers, and people of every opinion imaginable each with thousands and thousands of followers, we need to look to only one place, to only one person for guidance. We only need to look to Jesus Christ. Our way to God the Father is through

the person of Jesus Christ. We take these steps by responding to his call for us to take up our crosses and follow him. Any theory or practice that diminishes the need for Jesus in our lives or relegates his presence to a secondary role cannot be our way to the Father.

Humanity is being given dignity, the dignity of the One whose humanity received the Holy Spirit at His Baptism. Jesus is being baptized for all of God's creation, for us. He carries on His Body each of us in the mystic oneness of time and place. We are there, each of us, in one of the billions of beads of water on His Body. His love for us is beyond our understanding. His love for us is infinitely greater than our concepts of wonderful. He is carrying us on His Body from His Baptism to His Cross. During that time He teaches us. He teaches us the Way of Love, the Way of the Kingdom, the Way of the Father.

His voice is the one we need to hear.

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