

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Jan 10th 2016

The Baptism of the Lord

With Jesus before the Father

Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus admits us to the secret depths of Jesus' relationship with his Father. There, not only is he "reminded" of his identity as Beloved Son, but the Father's "estimation" of his Son comes to his ears as well: "with you I am well pleased."

This tender account of the relationship between Jesus and his Father reminds us of a most human desire: the desire that a child may be "pleasing" in the eyes of his or her parents. No matter the age, nothing builds up a child more than to hear from a parent, "I am so proud of you; I am so pleased with you." These words bring such joy, such affirmation.

The astonishing message of this feast is that the identity and "estimation" which Jesus possesses before his Father, is the same identity and "estimation" which we can claim, thanks to our Baptism. What Jesus possesses by nature, we possess by adoption, the incredible gift of God's mercy toward us. We are beloved daughters and sons; the Father is "well pleased" with us. But how difficult it is for us to accept this identity and this estimation! What endless evasions we construct and conditions we place on that simple truth!

Perhaps a fitting meditation for us on this feast would be to sit quietly with the phrase, "with you I am well pleased" and to let it wash over us. We might pay attention to what comes up in our hearts as we do and then to relate all of that to God. And then, perhaps in that quiet encounter, overcoming our objections and healing whatever obstacles may appear, the Lord might move us to embrace that truth which the "kindness and generous love" of God have won for us.

Rev. Richard Gabuzda - Creighton University's Institute for Priestly Formation