

JANUARY 11 FATHER ROSHAN LOY D'SOUZA

Baptism of the Lord

A few years ago, a young boy stood nervously at the edge of a swimming pool. His father was already in the water, smiling up at him. “Jump,” he said, holding out his arms. The boy hesitated—he wanted to trust, but fear held him back. Finally, gathering courage, he jumped. The father caught him instantly, lifting him up with joy. Later the boy said, “The best part wasn’t the jump. It was knowing my father was waiting for me.”

Trust, identity, and mission—these three themes run through today’s readings and come to fullness in the Baptism of the Lord.

Isaiah speaks first, describing the mysterious “Servant of the Lord,” someone chosen, gentle, steadfast, and filled with God’s Spirit. This servant will not break the bruised reed nor quench the dimly burning wick. Instead, he will bring justice—not through force, but through faithful love. God calls him “a covenant to the people, a light to the nations” who will open blind eyes and free those in darkness. Isaiah paints the picture of a Messiah who saves not by domination, but by compassion. A rescuer who comes close.

This prophecy prepares us for Jesus at the Jordan River. Matthew shows Him not as a ruler demanding privilege, but as a humble servant stepping into the waters with sinners. John the Baptist cannot understand it—“I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus’ response, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness,” reveals His whole mission. He identifies Himself fully with humanity. He enters our muddy waters—our struggles, our fears, our wounds—not because He needs cleansing, but because we do.

And then heaven speaks:

“This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

In that moment, Jesus' identity and mission are revealed. The Father affirms Him. The Spirit descends upon Him. And Jesus begins His public ministry as the true Servant Isaiah promised.

Acts 10 gives us the echo of this revelation: Peter proclaims that God shows no partiality, that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, and “went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed.” The baptism is not just a private moment—it is the launching point of a life totally given for others.

So what does this feast say to us?

First, our identity. In our own baptism, the Father also looked upon us and said, “You are my beloved.” Sometimes we forget this. We may define ourselves by our failures, our past, our insecurities, or by what others think. But today's Gospel invites us back to the truth: We belong to God. Before we achieve anything, before we prove anything, we are loved.

Second, our mission. Like Jesus, we are sent to bring light into darkness, to lift up the bruised and comfort the weak. Every baptized Christian has a share in Christ's mission—to heal, to reconcile, to encourage, to bring justice gently and faithfully. Baptism is not just a ceremony we attended long ago; it is a daily calling.

Third, our trust. Jesus stepped into the waters knowing the Father's love was with Him. We, too, must learn to “jump” like the little boy in the story—trusting that the Father is waiting in the waters of our life, ready to hold us.

When we face uncertainty, trials, or fear, we do not face them alone. The Spirit that rested on Jesus in the Jordan rests on us as well.

Today, as we reflect on Jesus' baptism, let us renew our own. Let us live as beloved children, humble servants, and Spirit-filled witnesses. And may we trust that the Father's arms are always beneath us, ready to lift us into new life. Ame