

Good Morning Everyone!

Another beautiful day. As Fr. Gillespie discussed last week there are three Epiphany's. The first is the birth of Christ, the second is today. The Baptism of our Lord in the River Jordan. The third is the Wedding at Cana when Jesus began his public ministry.

1. Today's Readings: [The Baptism of the Lord | USCCB](#)

2. ***The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus:*** The Baptism of the Lord

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. This brings to an end the liturgical season of Christmas. Tomorrow we begin Ordinary time.

In the Eastern Church this feast is called Theophany (a visible manifestation of God) because at the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan God appeared in three persons. The baptism of John was a preparation for the Baptism of Christ. It moved men to repentance and to confess their sins. Christ did not need the baptism of John. He was absolutely sinless and impeccable. He conferred upon the water the power of the true Baptism which would remove all the sins of the world: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sin of the world".

Many of the incidents which accompanied Christ's baptism are symbolic of what happened at our Baptism. At Christ's baptism the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; at our Baptism, the Trinity took its abode in our soul. At His baptism Christ was proclaimed the "Beloved Son" of the Father; at our Baptism we become the adopted children of God. At Christ's baptism the heavens were opened; at our Baptism heaven was opened to us.

Picture of Jordan River from last year's trip to the Holy Land!



Why the Baptism of the Lord is a "Christmas" Feast



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You may still see Christmas decorations in Catholic churches on this liturgical celebration.

In the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, the Baptism of the Lord has been celebrated on a separate feast for many centuries. Originally it was the primary mystery celebrated on January 6 (Feast of Epiphany), but over time it was separated and assigned a different day.

In 1955 it was assigned the octave day of Epiphany, January 13, but soon after the Second Vatican Council was moved to the Sunday after Epiphany.

In this context it has always been a "Christmas" feast, celebrated within the Christmas cycle. However, it may seem a little strange to still have the baby Jesus in the manger and celebrate a moment during his adult life.

Yet, it is entirely fitting when reflecting on the central mystery being commemorated.

Both the feast of the Nativity and Baptism of the Lord highlight the humility of Jesus Christ. In both instances Jesus clearly displayed his desire to become one with us, so that he can raise us up with him.

Pope Benedict XVI explains this eloquently in his homily on the Baptism of the Lord in 2013.

Jesus shows his solidarity with us, with our efforts to convert and to be rid of our selfishness, to break away from our sins in order to tell us that if we accept him in our life, he can uplift us and lead us to the heights of God the Father. And Jesus' solidarity is not, as it were, a mere exercise of mind and will. Jesus truly immersed himself in our human condition, lived it to the end, in all things save sin, and was able to understand our weakness and frailty. For this reason, he was moved to compassion, he chose to "suffer with" men and women, to become a penitent with us. This is God's work which Jesus wanted to carry out: the divine mission to heal those who are wounded and give medicine to the sick, to take upon himself the sin of the world.

Jesus not only assumed our flesh at the Nativity but became like us in all things except sin. He even was baptized by his cousin St. John the Baptist, even though he had no need for baptism.

The incarnation of Jesus is a marvelous mystery, one that reminds us of the love God has for humanity. St. Paul summarized it best in his letter to the Philippians.

Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

Source: aleteia.org