Baptism of the Lord — January 9, 2022

From the Desk of Fr. Leo

This weekend, the Church asks us to leave aside the sweet, touching scene of the crib. We must see Jesus not as a tiny, helpless infant, but as a grown man who takes upon himself a tremendous burden and responsibility. The burden is the weight of the sins of all humankind. The responsibility is to make reparation for those sins.

The fact that Jesus was baptized by John was something of a difficulty for the early Church. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The early Church was keenly aware of the fact that Jesus as divine was absolutely sinless. The question was why should someone who was free of sin submit to a baptism that included an admission of sin.

The fact that our Lord was baptized by John showed that he was taking upon himself the sins of the whole world, even though he was perfectly innocent of sin himself.

This day's feast then manifests that Jesus came to be our Savior through his obedient and loving acceptance of suffering. But it also manifests what our lives ought to be as Christians, as followers of Christ, as those who live the Christ-life today.

Our Christian life began with our baptism. It too was a self-abasement, a humiliation. But we emerged from the waters of baptism as new people with a new life. Our baptism was an end and a beginning. It was an end of the life of sin and the beginning of the new life of God's favor. It was a sharing in the very death and resurrection of Jesus.

Every time we as baptized people celebrate Mass, we identify ourselves with Jesus., as he renews his sacrificial death on the cross. We implicitly say that we too wish to be suffering servants of God, that we wish to accept any suffering that is necessary to disassociate ourselves from sin. Each one of us has had the experience of knowing that self-denial and suffering are frequently involved in avoiding sin. Even more importantly the attempt positively to lead a good, Christ-like life means self-sacrifice and generosity. In the Mass we not only identify ourselves with the suffering and generosity of Christ, but we also see the supreme model and example of what our lives should be: a total gift of ourselves to God in obedience and love.

But all our sacrifice and generosity are worth it, for they will lead us to the fullness of life for which we all yearn. Recalling the words of St. Paul, we should realize that "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we are also to live with him". (Romans 6:8)

The Church then calls us from the crib of the infant to the Cross of the Savior. But in doing so, the Church does not destroy the joy and happiness that was ours at Christmas. Rather, the Church shows us the goal and purpose of the birth of Christ: the fullness of life that comes from the suffering and death of Jesus. And this Sunday, that fullness of life is our hope and expectation.

Fr. Leo Alban Asuncion

Mass Intentions for the Week

Tues.	**January 11**	**11:00AM**
Esteban & Esther Licad		Lilibeth Licad
Wed.	**January 12**	**11:00AM**
Simeon Rojo†		Imelda & Dolly
Thur.	**January 13**	**11:00AM**
Simeon Rojo†		Imelda & Dolly
Fri.	**January 14**	**11:00AM**
Simeon Rojo†		Imelda & Dolly
Sat.	**January 15**	**4:30PM**
Simeon Rojo†		Imelda & Dolly
Sun.	**January 16**	**9:00AM**
People of the Parish		
Port Costa		**11:00AM**
Francis Hallekemp†		Family

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