

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, January 10, 2021
Baptism of the Lord
Cycle B

There was once a woman who brought her child for baptism. “What’s the baby’s name?” asked the pastor. “Toyota”, said the mother. Taken aback the pastor said, “Why?” “Father, it’s because my eldest name is ‘Ford’, then the second one is ‘Mercedes’.” “Oh, I see”, the pastor replied. “So then, what do you want me to use for the baptism of your child: diesel or gasoline?”

As we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, let us review our ideas about this first of the sacraments. Jesus himself needed no baptism because he was sinless in his humanity. Jesus was not sanctified when he was baptized. It was he who sanctified the water John the Baptist poured on him.

Jesus received baptism in order to embrace our sins. He stood among the ranks of sinners so that all sinners may receive forgiveness. His baptism was not for himself, it was for you and me.

So what is the effect of baptism on us? Two things: we are filled with the Holy Spirit and we are invested with power. The Spirit identified Jesus as the Son of the Father and in our case the same Spirit connects us to God, making us children of the Father by adoption. If we are children, then we are like our Father in our day-to-day existence. And we need to see these things happening in our lives. Are we growing in the image of the Father in the way we speak, think, or act? Can people see that you and I belong to God?

In baptism, we are also filled with power. This power is the power to serve and love. This is the power to forgive, understand, and share. This is the power to continue the mission of Jesus in our own daily experiences.

Every time we plan a baptism or attend one, let us recall its true meaning in our lives as Christians. In this sacrament, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and we are made powerful to follow the Lord. Baptism is not simply a tradition or social function, not just a community affair. It speaks rather of a responsibility to grow to care for the grace we receive and see it flower in our lives and in the life of the one being baptized.

Here in our community at Resurrection we are blessed to have a couple of ministries. These remind us of God's grace and empowerment that He bestowed upon each of us in our own baptism. Every time I see parishioners doing their own ministry, it reminds me of how the Spirit of God is working and empowering them. Because, every time we do our part and mission as God's children, we are accomplishing the purpose God has given to each of us. And like the Father said to Jesus in our Gospel today, He would also say to us, "You are my beloved Sons and Daughters, with you I am well pleased."

Amen