

Renewing our Baptismal Gifts

“The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity” (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1273).

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord we celebrate today marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning (1st Sunday) of the Ordinary Time of the Year. Throughout the joyous season of Christmas, we celebrated God’s greatest gift to us, the gift of himself through his son our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to become one with us so that we can become one with God and share in the fullness of his life (John 10:10). Christ, the chosen one as Isaiah describes in the first reading came to demonstrate in a very practical way, through his life, the great love God has for us. The witness of St. Peter in the second reading from the book of the Acts of the Apostles shows equally that the mission of Christ was to share God’s love without partiality to all men and women who welcome him in their lives.

The Gospel of Mark describes the baptism of Jesus as a great moment of his identification with his people, approval of his mission by God, and equipment with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon him as a dove to equip him with the spirit of God, and the voice from heaven approves him as the beloved one, in whom the Father is well pleased. These truths about Jesus’ baptism are also truths about our baptism; either baptized as infants or adults. Our baptism opened for us the door for other sacraments. It cleansed us of the original sin, made us Christians, children of God, and members of the Church.

Through our baptism, God has given us the gifts of being recipients and instruments of his mercy in our world. We can continuously share in these unique gifts if we are always connected with him (John 15:5). We get connected to him through the life of prayer, listening to him (Word and Sacrament), the dictates of our good consciences, and gospel truths that come to us through one another. We pray that God will help us to keep on renewing our baptismal gifts by making them alive and active in our daily lives. Amen.

“The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from my hand” (John 10:27).