

The Liturgy last week revealed to us a mystery of God's plan. That mystery is that in Jesus all peoples, symbolized by the Magi, have been made "**co-heirs**" to the blessings promised to Israel. This week, we're shown how we claim our inheritance ... through water and the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Titus we read: **He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us**

In the Gospel today, Jesus humbles Himself to pass through Jordan's waters, not for the cleansing of sin, for He was without sin. Rather he submits to baptism in order to lead a new "exodus" - opening up the promised land of heaven so that all peoples can hear the words pronounced over Jesus today, that each of us is a beloved daughter or son of God.

In this way, our baptism is linked with that of Jesus. With baptism our new life of grace begins.

What we should strive to understand and embrace is that our journey of faith continues to unfold long after our baptism as we try to discern what this Sacrament means in our daily living.

For us as Christians – the fundamental and central meaning of Baptism goes well beyond the forgiveness of sins, though through it sins are forgiven.

At its deepest level, **to be baptized is to be immersed in the death of Christ so that we might rise with Christ.**

Dying and Rising . . . Life through Death.

How can Life come from Death? All of us want to live, but who among us wants to die? Death is letting go. This is true of our own physical death – and perhaps even truer when we experience the loss of someone we know and love.

This paradox of life through death speaks to the ways in which we must die a thousand deaths this side of the grave, in order to do what? In order to be fully alive.

Many centuries ago, St. Irenaeus said that the “glory of God is the human person fully alive.” ... Jesus says in the Gospel of John, that He has come so that we might have life and have it abundantly, and sometimes, that means dying and letting go.

Are there things today that I need to let go of in order to experience the new creation that I already am?

Are there things within my heart or my mind that are needlessly taking up space, distracting me from living as the child of God that I became in baptism?

Are there parts of my life that I need to let go of, to empty out, making room for the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and Giver of Life” as we proclaim in our Creed, to dwell more fully within me?

- Perhaps there’s a friendship I have ignored and let slip away through inattention or ambivalence.
- Perhaps I am weighed down by my attachment to wealth, to power, to possessions.
- Maybe I am so absorbed with the daily problems of my own life that I am unable to see and hear my sisters and brothers in need.

Today, as we celebrate this feast of “The Baptism of the Lord”, the Church invites all of us to renew our own baptismal promises, so that we can live ever more transparently as a disciple of Jesus, striving to do what is right, what is true, and good, and beautiful.

As we come to the end of this Christmas Season – the season that celebrates the reality that the Divine became Human, the mysterious marriage of Divinity with Humanity – let us pray that by living out our own baptism, we may be fully, joyfully alive each and every day.