

BAPTISM OF THE LORD Year B

A judge in LA began to notice a large number of teens coming before him had tattoos (hands arms face) Gangs - He also found that employers wouldn't hire kids with those tats. So he found a local plastic surgeon who volunteered his time to remove them. So far he has removed hundreds of tats, changing lives.

Baptism is like an irremovable tattoo – identifying us as disciple of Jesus.

Today is all about Baptism – Jesus' Baptism in particular.

- John went all around the country telling people to repent and to ask God for forgiveness.
- After they repented of their sin and received God's forgiveness, John baptizes them.
- They were baptized to show that God had forgiven their sins & given them a fresh start.

- **Why would Christ need Baptism?**

1. St. Maximus of Turin: **Christ is Baptized, not to be made holy by the water
But to make the water holy**

To purify the water, consecrating it for all that were to follow.

2. It marked Jesus' acceptance of His vocation – to preach the Kingdom of God
 - Called out of village of His childhood
 - Called out of His prior occupation
 - Called into the larger world of God's purpose
 - Called into obedience

Jesus stood before John the Baptist and saw those who had been baptized before Him

He saw people realizing that the change had to begin with themselves.

Imagine the long line of people coming to John – and JC in their midst.

In humble obedience, He joined them. He was baptized.

We call ourselves Christians – so we follow Jesus.

- Jesus accepted John's baptism & filled with the HS began the work of the Kingdom.
- Today we ask for the strength to join Him
 - Today we seek a new way, a new mode of action, one that promotes love
 - *Even when under attack.*
- We ask for the courage to join Him in the Jordan River
 - That we might be filled with that same HS
 - That we might live in a way that promotes love & grows the Kingdom of God.

Baptism is: **Initiation** into People of God **Call** to discipleship **Commission** into ministry
This was the beginning of Jesus' ministry & Baptism initiated that mission

Just like Jesus – In Baptism WE are **initiated, called and commissioned**.

As you dip your hands into those miniature baptismal fonts coming in and out of church
remember: YOU are INITIATED, CALLED and COMMISSIONED, to be a Christian

Father says to us: "You are my beloved, in whom I am well pleased – Go and be my disciple"