

Homily

The Church celebrates this Sunday the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord and with this episode begins the public life of Jesus, which we will gradually meditate during this ordinary time that we also begin today.

What we have heard about the events in the Jordan River, described by the Evangelist Mark, highlights that Jesus is anointed by the "Holy Spirit who rests upon Him", to begin the mission that he had to carry out. Therefore it was not a baptism of penance, as John the Baptist had proclaimed until then, but in Jesus it has a new meaning: to be baptized to fulfill the mission entrusted.

Perhaps many of us were baptized when we were still babies, however, the mission for each of us is present from that moment on. Jesus himself, in his human journey, was becoming aware of the mission that his Father had entrusted him and, in his baptism, he developed it publicly. The Lord Jesus, throughout his public preaching, will manifest this reality: he has come to fulfill the will of the Father and the Father is pleased with him.

In the same way, we have been baptized and we are also called to a mission. Little by little we must become aware of it. The baptism we received was not simply the fulfillment of a tradition, but it was the beginning of what we must fulfill now.

Baptism certainly opens the doors to the other sacraments. Without baptism we cannot receive communion, confirmation, or the sacrament of marriage or priesthood order. But even further, having been baptized marks us eternally for a public mission: to announce the good news of the Gospel.

Brothers and sisters, when our parents and godparents asked for baptism for us, they manifested and witnessed not only the faith they professed, but also the joy of being Christian and of belonging to the Church.

It is the joy that springs from the awareness of having received a great gift from God, precisely faith, a gift that none of us deserves, but which has been freely given to us and to which we have responded with our "yes".

Consequently, we could think and reflect here the role that parents and godparents of each one of us have played until now, with respect to the deep experience of our faith; however, this does not eliminate nor cancel each of us thinking and becoming aware of the talent and gift that we have received by being baptized, but above all, of the mission that has been entrusted to us.

In the gospel we hear today, the baptism of Jesus is an epiphany, a manifestation of who Jesus really is and why he has come into the world. This is

what the Christian's baptism must be: a manifestation of what God is and what God does in man.

The baptism that we have received imprints an eternal character: we receive it once, for a lifetime. We cannot be baptized twice. For this reason, baptism is also a manifestation of God's action in us and in our lives.

Yes, God acts in us and the first step is baptism, because it gives us a purifying action that manifests His forgiveness; a transforming and life-giving action that reveals to us a new life in Him.

May the solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, beyond a liturgical feast, become for us the awareness as Christians of the action that God does in us, but above all may it be the moment to renew our Christian commitment for the mission to which we have been called.

God bless you.