Baptism of the Lord

MDP of God

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized?

After all – John’s Baptism was a baptism of repentance—Jesus was sinless – *Jesus had nothing to repent of*

In fact in Matthew’s gospel John says that to Jesus – He says, “I’m the one who should be baptized by you- I shouldn’t be baptizing you”

 And Jesus responded – “we have to do this to fulfill all righteousness”

There are several things going on here- and to understand it we need to take a look at the Old Testament

When you look at the book of Genesis – we see that at creation God created the waters- and we see the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters

And all of creation comes forth from the waters with the Holy Spirit hovering above

*So one of the things going on here is a new creation*—God is recreating the world through Jesus

In the world sin reigned – Jesus will bring saving grace- Jesus will allow His people to be reborn into a new life- a new life bought at the price of His saving work

SO there’s a new creation going on here- and in this *God is telling us that when we are baptized* – **we become a new creation** – we are born again to become His children

2ndly – This is where Jesus becomes the Christ

The word Christ means the anointed one- and Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit on the day of His baptism—so this is when Jesus becomes the anointed of God—the Christ

Obviously Jesus from all eternity was going to become the anointed one—but this is when He’s actually anointed in His humanity by the Holy Spirit

And He’s setting a pattern here – Just as He was anointed by the Holy Spirit on the day of His baptism

He guarantees that when we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—*that we also are anointed by the Holy Spirit* –

That when we are baptized we are elevated to becomes sons and daughters of God the most high

3rdly- This is the first public revelation of the Trinity- God is here revealing Himself to His people- more clearly than He ever had before

{use fingers- 1-2-3}We hear the voice of the Father- we see the Son anointed and the Holy Spirit comes in a visible form upon Jesus

Father, Son and Holy Spirit is revealed to us- that God is a community of love is revealed to us

One of the things that I think is important to note is that Jesus received His anointing through the ministry of John the Baptist

Remember John’s Father was a priest- John was of the priestly tribe—and so Jesus is baptized by this Levite—and that’s when God chooses for Him to be the anointed one

Through this ritual action of this man of the Old Testament priestly tribe – Jesus has the Holy Spirit anoint Him

In doing this Jesus transformed Baptism to become a source of grace for us

As the ancient saints said, “He was baptized in waters made holy by the one baptized”

And in being baptized He transformed baptism to become a source of grace for us

On the day you were baptized – that’s when you were first anointed by the Holy Spirit- that’s when you were elevated to become a son or daughter of God

God said of you on the day of your baptism- “You are my `beloved son – daughter/// - with you I am well pleased”

And that anointing you received came through the ministry of the Church

Now hold onto that idea- because I want to tell a little story to illustrate this

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It’s called –“The Haircut”—*I’ve shared it with you before*

A young boy had just received his driver's permit and

 asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car.

 His father said he would make a deal with his son. "You

 bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your

 Bible a little, get your hair cut and we'll talk about

 the car."

 The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd

settle for the offer and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, "Son, I've been real proud.---You brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible

But-- I'm real disappointed you didn't get your hair cut."

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The young man paused a moment then said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair. And there's even a strong argument that Jesus had long hair."

To this his father replied, "Did you also notice that all those people walked everywhere they went?"

My friends- that boy had the idea that he shouldn’t have to do things his dad’s way – and his dad should still let him use the car

The joke gets the idea across that the father wasn’t going to have any of that

And I tell that story because there’s a lot of people who don’t like God’s plan

God’s plan is that we will receive His saving grace through the ministry of His Church – just as Jesus received His anointing through the ministry of John the Baptist

God’s plan is that we will receive His saving grace through the sacraments- through physical, tangible ways:- just as Jesus received His anointing with the Holy Spirit when He was baptized in water by John

That’s why Jesus said, “Unless your born again of water and the Spirit- you have no life in you.”

That’s why Jesus taught – “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood – you have no life in you- He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”

That’s why Jesus on the day of the Resurrection breathed on the Apostles and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, whose sins you retain, are retained.”

God’s plan is that we receive His saving grace through the ministry of the Church – *through the sacraments that He instituted for our salvation*

But you know, we can be like that boy in the story

 His dad told him- you don’t get the car unless you cut your hair

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The boy didn’t like that idea- in his mind he should be able to have the car without cutting his hair – there was no reason for him to cut his hair- it shouldn’t be that way ////he should be able to use the car no matter what his hair was like

Many people today basically say to God –“I don’t like your plan. I don’t see why I or my children have to be baptized to receive your saving grace

I don’t see why I have to confess my sins to the successors of the Apostles to have my sins forgiven

I don’t see why I have to come to Church on Sunday to receive your grace in Holy Communion

I should be able to receive your grace at home or on the golf course or as I sleep in on Sunday—why should I have to go to other people?

Why do I need water or bread and wine? – or the ministry of a priest?--- I should be able to receive your grace the way I want to”

 Well- it doesn’t work that way

Why do we need physical things? Why do we need the ministry of the Church to receive His grace?

In all honesty I don’t know—*I mean I can give reasons* – **but the bottom line is that’s what Jesus says we need to do**- that’s the way our all knowing God willed to do it

And I’m not smart enough to fully understand – I just need to obey

Just like Adam and Eve weren’t smart enough to know that when God says – “don’t eat this” – that they should have listened

God now says to us, “Unless you’re born again of water and the Holy Spirit you have no life in you. He now says, “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life – the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise them up”

Now He tells us through His apostle James – “Confess your sins to one another” – and he said that in the context of sending for the priests of the Church.

Why did Jesus choose to receive His anointing in His humanity through the ministry of John the Baptist?

Why did He choose that His anointing with the Spirit should come through baptism

Because He wanted us to know that we need others if we are to be saved – we need the ministry of His Church if we are to be saved – we need the sacraments-if we are to be saved

God chooses to work through the people and the physical things of this world to convey His saving grace to us

We might not fully understand why – *but we need to believe* – **we need to obey**- *we need to open our hearts and our lives to His saving grace and be humble enough to receive that grace in the way He wills to give it to us*

Amen? Amen