

Homily. Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Year C. 11/12 January 2025.

At the hands of John the Baptist, Jesus baptism was a affirmation of his identity as the Beloved and well pleasing Son of God. Luke's short gospel story, supported by the other gospels, makes this much clear. But, what about us? What do we think of and understand about ourselves when we look at a Baptismal font?

Well, I can for myself when looking back across 40 years of my ministry and service. When I see a font I think of the several thousands, that's right, the thousands that I've Baptised. At fonts of marble and wood, stone and even of glass I see people and families of all shapes, makes and sizes coming forward to the waters of new birth and life; infants and young children, teenagers and adolescents and adults young and old.

All of them came to fonts like the one in this church to receive a gift, one offered by God through the mediation and work of the Church; that's us by the way. Needless to say, the gift was free and it looked for a response from those who received it. The gift was one of cleansing and rebirth into a new family, into God's family. Baptism made all of these people, and at some point in time, all of us into God's sons and daughters, Jesus sisters and brothers and therefore the brothers and sisters of each other.

In Baptism we were united to Jesus and to his gospel way becoming part of his body, members of his Church. We gained a new identity shared with us by the Lord; that of being made the beloved sons and daughters of the One loving Father and God. The response sought to this gift was that we, too, would live in ways that were well pleasing to God. Our

families, our schools and all of the works and services of our parishes are offered to help us towards this goal. Most importantly we are called to remember who we really are, namely God's children, and act accordingly.

It's the practice of remembering this new, permanent and God given identity of ours that lies within and beneath everything we say and do in this place and out there in the big, wide world. When we fail because of our forgetfulness and selfishness there is even a remedy offered to us in our repentant prayers and good works, in our Eucharistic communion and in the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing.

This is what I see and understand when I look at a Baptism font like the one before us; our new identity and family given to us by God; a new way of thinking, acting and living every day in the image and Spirit of our brother, Jesus Christ. In turning now from the Table of the Word to the Table of the Eucharist we're turning towards God, leaning into who we are by faith; the gifted and graced siblings of Christ who want to live out our Baptisms by becoming evermore like our brother who gives himself to us.