

## **The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord A - Take the Plunge!**

January 11, 2026

Jesus saw John baptizing sincere people, responding to John's call and committing themselves to the New Kingdom of God that John said was at hand. Jesus wanted to be baptized and proclaim to the world that He was one with these people. John immediately recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, infinitely superior to him, but Jesus told him to baptize him. Jesus seized the moment that John was offering. He took the plunge. He went down into the water and was baptized. And the voice from heaven rang out, "This is my Beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased." So, in Jesus, the establishment of God's reign on earth has begun. Jesus did not need to be baptized, but the first theologians say that, with his body, with his divinity, in baptism he blessed all the waters, so that the waters would have the power to confer baptism. And then, before ascending to Heaven, Jesus told us to go into all the world to baptize. And from that day forward up until today, this has been an uninterrupted chain: they baptized their children, and their children their own, and those children... And so today this chain continues. Take the plunge. Seize the moment. Seize the day, *Carpe Diem* in the Latin poem by Horace. (Horace's Odes 1:11). The pagan poet was not talking about tomorrow, though, he was only talking about making the best use of the day. The Christian, though, seizes the day to take advantage of the moment that God gives us to allow him to change our lives and His world. The Christian seizes the day to prepare for tomorrow. I still remember how my Dad told me that he started a conversation with a PIME priest while sitting in the cross-harbour ferry in Hong Kong going to work one day and before he knew it, our whole family (except for my baby brother who was not born yet) took the plunge and got baptized in the Rosary Church in 1955. My Dad joined the Legend of Mary and volunteered to be a catechist to some people living in the offshore islands and he took me along to spread the good news.

Christ's baptism was a statement not only that God's approval was with him in a special way but also of his eagerness to start telling the world openly of its need for redemption. By accepting baptism, Jesus was committing himself to the work of taking away the sins of the world. At baptism, the consecrated waters cleansed our souls from the state of sin. The sacrament is the planting of the seed of christian life which grows and bears fruit as we develop our relationship with God. Christ was chosen for a mission and so are we. As members of God's family, our special role is to announce Jesus to the world. We are all called to witness to Christ in our own sphere of living and to make the world a better place by our presence. This can happen in our workplace, in the community, at home and even with strangers. As St. John says, "since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:11) In the second reading (Acts 10:34-38), Peter is making the point that the revelation of God's universal love began at the Jordan River. At the Jordan, Matthew, the evangelist, is showing us that in Jesus, the divine plan is being carefully worked out in every detail, and that every prediction concerning the Messiah is fulfilled in him.

God also has a divine plan for all of us. There are many graced moments in our lives. There are many times that we can allow God to draw us closer to Him. Some of these times are obvious, like confirmation, marriage, conventions and retreats, the celebration of the critical moments in the faith life of our children and grandchildren. There are other times that might not seem so obvious, ordinary times when we are called to make the ordinary extraordinary by seizing the day, respond to God's call and plunge into the river. We are called to seize the day and be One with all who are seeking the Kingdom of God. May Jesus, baptized by John, give us the courage to join Him in the Jordan River. Take the plunge! We must be transmitters of the faith. We must always think about how to hand on the faith to our children, our grandchildren, our friends, our neighbours and strangers we meet.

Even though Christmas is officially over, the message of the carol Hark! The herald angels sing still rings true with the baptism of Jesus at the Jordan:

Born that man no more may die.  
Born to raise the sons of earth.  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing.  
Glory to the newborn King!

Indeed, our baptism is our second birth!