

## Father Dave's Homily

### 01/13/13 ..... Baptism of the Lord C

-- Sometime in the past you might have had people ask you why Catholics (and many mainline Protestants) baptize babies. Sometimes we find that hard to answer. But I think Luke's account of Jesus' baptism gives us a good answer.

-- Notice that the gospel passes over the actual baptism to focus on when Jesus came out of the water. God's spirit comes upon him and announces *You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*

-- Essentially, that's what God does when each of us is baptized. He welcomes us into a relationship with him. He tells us we are his beloved daughters and sons. We don't earn this by something we do. Like all sacraments, it is a pure gift from God.

-- So even an infant, who can do nothing but smile, cry and make strange sounds can enter into that relationship of love. In baptism they are welcomed as God's children and incorporated into God's family.

-- The best description of Baptism was given to me by a professor who told us that *God grabs us by the scruff of the neck and does not let go.*

-- Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power in his baptism. When each of us was baptized we were anointed. The chrism we received on the crown of our head symbolizes our share in Christ's ministry as priest, prophet and king. The words of the prayer after baptism say just that.

-- Those of us who were baptized very young have had years to learn what that means and to try to live out our mission as beloved sons and daughters of God. Though our parents first made that commitment for us and (hopefully) nurtured us in our faith, we now have the responsibility to live as God's loved ones and spread that love.

-- Those of you who were baptized at an older age made this commitment for yourself. But you have the challenge of continuing to

live it out. We pray for you and for our catechumens preparing for baptism at the Easter Vigil.

-- By our baptism we are called to holiness of life. The Second Vatican Council told us that **all** Christians are called to holiness. There is not a greater holiness for priests and sisters and a lesser holiness for lay persons.

-- During our parish mission next month with Fr. Bob Wilhelm we will explore what that call to holiness means to us today. I urge you if at all possible to participate in these mission reflections. (Feb. 22-24)

-- After this homily, we will all renew the vows of our baptism. Most of us have done so before, at an Easter Mass or at a Mass where a baptism took place.

-- But I urge you to listen to what you are saying. We are promising to leave sin behind and reject its power in our lives. We are professing our belief in God, who loved us so much he sent his son to be crucified and to rise for our sakes.

-- We are affirming our belief that God's forgiveness is there for us, for we are all still sinners. And we profess our faith in the resurrection of the body and God's everlasting life for all his faithful people.

-- Jesus took up the mission of the Father when he was baptized. May we also take up the task of doing God's work and God's will in our corner of the world.

-- For, by Baptism, we are all God's beloved sons and daughters. Let's live our lives as if we really believe that!