

12. January 2020

“Baptism of Jesus”

Mt 3,13-17

Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him, with the words, 'It is I who need baptism from you, and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands.' Then John gave in to him. And when Jesus had been baptised he at once came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And suddenly there was a voice from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

Perhaps we can imagine a little of John's astonishment... The one of whom so much has been heard comes to him, whose name is on everyone's lips... Now he comes before him - John - to be baptized by him! How astonishing for the Baptist!

Actually, it should be the other way round, he should be baptized by Jesus!

John is not worth, he says so himself, to untie the straps of Jesus' sandals! (*cf. Jn 1,27*)

He knows that the one who is coming is bigger than him! (*cf. Mk 1,7*)

He baptizes only with water, Jesus with fire (*cf. Mt 3,11*), as John himself testifies! The Baptist knows who is coming to him!

But also he is invited to enter the school of the Lord, as we all are invited to understand God in his being ever better and deeper!

It is true: the glory of God is infinitely great and we will be amazed and astonished, and will love God in eternity, if we are allowed to see the glory of God! But this glory of God shows itself here on earth especially in the service of love! We know that this love will carry Jesus to the cross, his love for the Father and his love for us humans!

It is a love of service!

God, the incomparable, perfect in Himself, comes to serve us! Therefore Jesus says to John: *“Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that uprightness demands.”*

Jesus places himself in the whole history of the guilt of mankind. He himself becomes a true man to pay this debt, so that we may obtain forgiveness through him! This grace becomes effective if people accept the forgiveness that God offers! John certainly understands something of what Jesus wants, but he will not have understood the whole dimension. Nevertheless he is obedient to the word of the Lord and so he baptizes Jesus!

As soon as Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened and it was the Spirit of God who descended on him like a dove! Jesus is one with the Spirit and we hear the voice of the Father: this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The Most Holy Trinity is at work! What we hear here, in the witness of the Holy Scriptures, is then given to us in Holy Baptism, because we are baptized in the name of Jesus: in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

The whole life of the Blessed Trinity is to be unfolded in us. It is the Spirit of God who descends upon us as upon the Virgin Mary. Now Jesus is living in us more and more and this happens when we listen to the Spirit's leading and follow Him! We are called to become ever more like God and to serve other people in his spirit.

When we understand more and more deeply how God is, how He sinks His grace into us, how we are redeemed by the Blood of Jesus, how the love of the Father embraces us, how the Spirit of the loving God unfolds in us, then we become more and more grateful and praise God for what He does in us!

God wants us to look at our neighbor as our brother. This also applies to the people who are still far away from God. They still have to find the way to God, so that what God wants to give them can unfold in their lives. This is exactly what we should witness through our life; for every person is called to receive the grace of Christ, the forgiveness of guilt and thus to wake up to the true dignity!

In this way, as Christians, we can serve people and thus also become servants of love!