**Homily for the Baptism of the Lord(1/13/2019)**

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 Today, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. Through the weeks, we have big celebrations for the mystery of salvations. Two weeks ago, on Christmas day, through the Birth of Jesus, we saw the arrival of the Light in the world, and last week, on the Epiphany, through the Magi, we saw the manifestation of the true Light of the world to all the nations. And, this week, through the Baptism of Jesus, we see the beginning of the ministry of the Light in the world.

 As we begin our Ordinary Time, through the Baptism, Jesus begins His public ministry. His mission is to make God present in the ordinary events of daily life. So, during this Ordinary Time, we see the ministry of Jesus on earth. Now, God is among us in the Ordinary Time, in the ordinary events of every daily life.

 So, the Baptism was important for the ministry of Jesus. Let us look at this moment of Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan River.

 Jesus stood in line at His baptism with people. One of the features of modern life with which we are all familiar is ‘standing in line.’ We stand in line at the super market, at the movie theater, at voting booth, at the airplane ticket counter, at a restaurant, and so on. We all know the response to someone who cuts into the line or jumps ahead of the line.

 Whatever our educational or income level, ‘standing in line’ makes us all equal. Now, Jesus also stands in line for His Baptism with other people. Jesus did not confess sin, as others did, for He had none to confess; but He prayed, as others did, and kept up communion with His Father.

 The water of the Jordan River that day was filled with sins of all kinds as hundreds, maybe thousands, of people came to repent. Jesus had no need of that, of course.

 It was filled with every imaginable evil, with all kinds of sins. Many Pharisees and Scribes refused to step into such water. They didn’t want to be seen with sinners. They thought there was no need for repentance and washing for their lives. But, Jesus was not ashamed to step into the water with other people. There, He stood in line, shoulder to shoulder with the sinners. Here, His mission begins with an act of compassion and solidarity, as He takes upon Himself all of our burdens and sins.

 He shows us a great example and invites us to God’s love and mercy and forgiveness. It is a symbol of what His mission on earth was all about. He shows solidarity with all of us who are in need of healing and forgiveness. He became like us, and He truly came into our lives.

 Then, God reveals Jesus as His Son. The Gospel reports, “Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove. And, a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son.”” It is a public message identifying Jesus as Son by God Himself. True and deepest identity of Jesus is revealed by His Father.

 These words will continue to resound in the heart of Jesus throughout His life, reminding Him of who He is. Even as He dies on the cross, Jesus hands Himself over to death with the words, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” He remains always the Beloved Son. It was His identity, mission, and destiny.

 All of us have a mission in life, no matter what our particular vocation. Whatever this mission may be, it cannot be discovered unless we first discover our identity in God. We are His beloved and precious Sons and daughters. That’s why He is among us always! Knowing ourselves as Beloved Sons and Daughters provides the key, the place from which our mission and destiny flows.

 Today, we remember the Baptism of Jesus, His public embrace of His mission from the Father, and His solidarity with the human race. In Baptism, Jesus gave us an identity, a mission, and a destiny. Each time we come to Mass and each time we pray can be a time to embrace that identity, live that mission, and take a step closer to that destiny.

 God says to us today, as He says to Jesus in the Gospel, “You are my beloved sons and daughters; with you I am well pleased.”

 This is our identity, our mission, and our destiny!