

## **Baptism of the Lord – Year A (2026)**

In Brazil, a group of Christians worked with street children. Every day, boys from the street would get together to discuss their problems, share their fears and anger, all the while trying to figure out a way to survive just another day.

The “church people” who took care of many of these boys consisted of a Catholic priest, a Methodist, a tribal chief, a Presbyterian, and a young Lutheran pastor.

One day, one of the boys said, “I would like to be baptized.” “In which church?” asked the Catholic.

The boy was puzzled. “What do you mean, which church?” In our church, right here in the street,” he replied. “No, no, no. In which church building and religion would you like to attend?” Was the response of the young Lutheran pastor.

The boy continued to struggle in getting his point across. “Building? “Religion?” No, I want to be baptized right here, in our church, here on the street. I want to be baptized here.”

The Methodist said he couldn’t issue a certificate. The Catholic didn’t have permission to baptize outside of a church. The Lutherans and Presbyterians couldn’t agree on which Creed to use. The tribal chief needed three days to get ready. But the boy insisted, nonetheless.

Finally, they all came to their senses. “Let us ‘give in for now.’ ‘We must do this if we would fulfill all of God’s demands.’ So, they gave in. The boy was baptized right there in the street, in the name of the Most Holy Trinity.

In today’s Gospel, we heard that Jesus was baptized by John because it was “fitting...to fulfill all righteousness.” In other words, it was “the right thing to do.”

I won’t speak for you, but I’ve long held to the belief that God always does “the proper thing.”

We believe, for example, that God decided it was “the proper thing” to become human when he did, how he did, and where he did.

Jesus always followed his Father’s example, and he did “the proper thing” even when he submitted himself to be baptized by John and allowed God’s favor to rest on him.

The same happened to us when we were baptized. God’s love comes alive in us even though we were, for the most part, unaware of how far from that love we would stray.

The Baptism of Christ is the occasion when the Trinity is revealed: the Son makes himself known, the Father speaks, and the Holy Spirit descends.

It is this mystery, the mystery of the Trinity, that brings the revelations of who Jesus is, that brings this holy season of Christmas to its fulfillment.

As Christians, we do not believe that God is merely an idea or a projection of our best selves. God is not for us some unknown and mysterious force in the universe or a feeling that comes and goes depending on how well or poorly our day is going.

The one, true God has revealed himself in Christ as the Trinity- the undivided communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a union of Divine Love “in which we live and move and have our being.”

God’s love is at the heart of the gospel, and God’s delight in us is not based on our success, perfection, or productivity.

We live in a world that constantly tells us to prove ourselves. Every day we get up, we need to give evidence that we are worthy and valuable.

May the contemplation of Jesus' Baptism and the recollection of our own Baptism help us to be aware that we need to organize our lives in the light of the Gospel. Our souls have been sealed with an indelible sign, so we never forget that we are God's children.