

HOMILY HIGHLIGHT:

THE GIFT OF PRESENCE - As a people of liturgical prayer, our celebration this weekend of The Baptism of the Lord brings to conclusion the Season of Christmas by reminding us just why we celebrate the birth of Jesus at all --- namely, because of the mission he embraced from the Father to proclaim, teach, heal and bear witness to the presence of the Kingdom of God and, ultimately, to suffer, die and rise from the dead freeing humanity from the ultimate power of sin!

In today's scene from Luke's Gospel, we do not even hear the actual story of Jesus' baptism by John, but we do hear the Father's voice spoken to Jesus that confirms something hugely important: with the descent of the Spirit and the voice of the Father, the message is clear that Jesus is being called to a vocation that was to be something very different, distinct and unique from John's mission (as important as that surely was).

There are several important take-aways at work here:

1. Jesus, like every human person had to seek God's will in his life; he had to "figure it out"
2. Jesus, like every human person, could only do what God was calling him to do, not pretend to be anybody else
3. Jesus found his inspiration and clarity of purpose from several key sources: the Bible, prayerful communion with God, engagement with others trying to follow the call of God in their lives.

In your family, with your spouse, in your workplace, in your church --- you have a mission that only you can take on! God needs you, and God's mission needs you! Like Jesus: you will have to "figure it out" throughout your life; you can only do what God is calling you to do, not try to be someone else; you can find clarity of your mission through the Bible, prayer, and in relationships with other disciples --- where the gift of the presence of God sends you on mission with Jesus!