

Homily The Baptism of the Lord Mark 1: 7-11

- The Gospel reading we just heard is called “The Baptism of the Lord”, Jesus’ baptism day!!
- You might be wondering: “Why did Jesus need to be baptized? The answer is simple. Jesus did not need the baptism of John. John was baptizing as a call to (and sign of) interior repentance. Jesus had no need to repent. But, nonetheless, Jesus comes to John. John resists at first but Jesus insists. Why?
- Because the Baptism of Jesus was an epiphany. It was a moment of manifestation. As He emerged from the waters, “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; with you I am well pleased.’”
- There are two very important things that happened at Jesus baptism.
- First, God the Father sent a loved filled blessing to Jesus. God sent Jesus the grace, the strength that Jesus would need to fulfill His life’s purpose and to carry out the work His Father had planned for Him.
- The second important thing that happened at Jesus’ baptism was that everyone present there (and there were many people present) realized there was something different; something special about this Jesus. They were attracted to Him. Wanted to hear Him, be close to Him, follow Him.
- This manifestation of the Sonship and divinity of Jesus took place in a physical, audible and visible form so that all present would know, without question, that Jesus was the Son of the Father. So Jesus’ baptism is a way in which God the Father introduced His Son and His Son’s mission to the world.

- I think our own baptisms are very much like Jesus' baptism.
- At our baptism God the Father sent a love-filled blessing to each of us. God sent us the grace, the strength that we need to fulfill our life's purpose and to carry out the work our Father has planned for us.
- And make no mistake, we were created for a purpose and there is a plan for each of us. There is work for each of us to carry out.
- That work will be different for each of us. We interact with different groups of people (friends, families, co-workers); we live in different places, have different jobs. But there is one thing all of our work has in common: to bring God's presence, His love and His healing into the world and the lives of others.
- Saint John Neumann reminds us of this beautiful truth when he writes:
- *“Everyone who breathes, high and low, educated and ignorant, young and old, man and woman, has a mission, has a work. We are not sent into this world for nothing; we are not born at random; we are not here, that we may go to bed at night, and get up in the morning, toil for our bread, eat and drink, laugh and joke, sin when we have a mind, and reform when we are tired of sinning, rear a family and die. God sees every one of us; He creates every soul, . . . for a purpose. He needs, He deigns to need, every one of us. He has an end for each of us; we are all equal in His sight, and we are placed in our different ranks and stations, not to get what we can out of them for ourselves, but to labor in them for Him. As Christ has His work, we too have ours; as He rejoiced to do His work, we must rejoice in ours also.”*
- The second important thing that happened at Jesus' baptism also happens to us – if we let it. Everyone

present at Jesus baptism realized there was something different; something special about this Jesus. They were attracted to Him. Wanted to hear Him, be close to Him. They sensed they were in the presence of holiness, of God.

- If we let the Lord work in us and through us people will see us as different, special - perhaps sense holiness. We can draw people to God by what they see in us, in what we say and do.
- If they see us pray, perhaps they will pray. If they see us go to Mass and receive the sacraments, perhaps they will do the same. If they see us reach out to love and to care and to help others, perhaps they will too.
- It all started for Jesus at His baptism. So today we celebrate that baptism and we remember just how similar was our baptism and how precious we are to God our Father.