

*"No wonder the heavens opened!"*

**Baptism of Our Lord  
January 10, 2010**

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. Jesus submits to a baptism of repentance offered by John at the Jordan River. Much is made of the cleansing power of baptism, but Jesus was not in need of cleansing. Is this submission to baptism by water a mere act of humility on the part of Jesus, a little game of pretend?

The reaction of the Father to Jesus' action indicates there is something much more important going on. We have to look at the meaning of baptism beyond cleansing. Baptism is also being welcomed and accepted into a group of believers, having one's life and spiritual well-being now forever linked with theirs. It is accepting and being accepted by a family of faith where all take on responsibility for loving and working for the welfare of one another.

This is the deeper meaning of Jesus' plunge into the Jordan. He is embracing as His brothers and sisters all who seek this repentance and who look for the coming of God's kingdom. In this acceptance of a family of faith He brings others into sharing His status as God's Son. Through Him all who repent and believe become true children of God.

This is why the Father is so pleased with Jesus. It is not that He performed some pious act of humility. It is that He embraced believers as family, elevating them to a closer relationship to the Father, and linked His own future with theirs in struggling to make the reign of God a physical reality. No wonder the heavens opened!

God bless you.

Fr. Pat