

When I started to put together this reflection together, I was in the hospital after an open-heart surgery. Tubes were still connected in my chest to drain post-operation fluids. I saw blood, water and other fluids drained through those tubes. The sight of those fluids made me remember Jesus' death on the cross - water flowed from his pierced side (Jn 19:34), an outpouring of his grace through water. This brings me to the feast we celebrate this Sunday.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord celebrates Jesus walking into the waters of Jordan to show that he is one with the baptism of John. The baptism of John is one of repentance, people coming back, going into the Jordan and washing themselves clean of all of their sins and readying themselves for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So, by walking out of the water, Jesus who has accepted our humanity, shares with us his divinity. He is the Son, and we are the sons and daughters of the Father. He is the one that his Father looks down upon and He says, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

This Sunday's feast also celebrates the beginning of his public ministry. A public ministry that is being carried out today by us – individuals who make up the Body of Christ. Our public ministry consists of preaching the truth, doing the truth in love, caring for the poor, recognizing God's presence in creation, seeking justice and peace and offering thanksgiving in the liturgy. Let us look into a couple of our ministries today:

1. **Bearing witness to the truth.** Our world is pummeled by falsehood and fraud, filled with propaganda intended to create great lies that oppress people, to advertising, to manipulating numbers to prove a point, to putting a spin on a story. There is even the realization that if you repeat an idea often enough, people will become so familiar with it that they will assume it is some basic fact. Do we simply agree with this? What happened in the Capitol last Wednesday is simply the fruit of all the propagation of falsehoods out of selfishness and the desire for power. As members of the Body of Christ, renewing our baptismal vows means renouncing what happened in the Capitol and being honest and doing the truth.
2. **Caring for those who suffer oppression.** A lot are suffering oppression these days due to the pandemic. Many have lost their jobs and are being evicted. Third world countries, like the Philippines where my family is, are also suffering oppression because they are not able to acquire the vaccine for Covid-19. Many are dying!

At Christ's baptism, the Spirit of the Father bore witness that he is truly the son of the Father. This is equally what happens to us, not only at baptism, but daily. As we continue to walk with God by fulfilling our baptismal promises, the Holy Spirit, continues to testify: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

You are all God's beloved children in whom God is well pleased! Your love and prayers made me strong before the surgery and they are keeping me confident of a speedy recovery. I best express my sincerest gratitude in my native tongue: MARAMING SALAMAT! (Thank you very much!)