



Reflection from Deacon Ross Beaudoin

It's not often that Catholics recall their own baptism, seeing that most Catholics are infants when they are baptized. I have the blessing of recalling not only my own baptism but that of my brother as well. Bill was near three years old and I was seven when we were baptized.

Our mother had passed away when Bill was born. Later on our father remarried; Flo, a Catholic, became our mother. The Catholic Church had an understanding that at seven years a child reached the age of reason. [Don't you believe it. I'm still looking for that benchmark!] So, it was with that in mind that our Catholic step-mother and our non-Catholic father decided that Bill should be baptized a Catholic and I should be asked if I wanted to become a Catholic as well.

That decision was a slow process. A number of people wanted get in on it. My paternal grandmother, who had raised me after my mother died, wanted to be included (she was Christian Scientist). My Catholic step-mother wanted to be involved. I don't think my father was personally invested in the outcome of the decision, but he wanted my birth-mother's interests to be noted, by including her Baptist Church in the deliberations. Confused? It was a bit confusing....

I went to a different church each Sunday: Christian Science, Catholic and Baptist. After some time I had to make a decision. There were some things in each religion that I couldn't put together and be OK with. My understanding of the Catholic Church was immature at best. But I felt that there were more things there than I could understand, and somehow I felt these were important. (This was in 1943: the Mass was in Latin and there were many Catholic practices that were not easily understood.)

So, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the love and caring of family members, I decided to be baptized a Catholic, along with my brother, Bill.

I consider it a special blessing to be able to recall my baptism. I was just a child at the time. In today's gospel we read of Jesus presenting himself for baptism. As an adult, Jesus was making a choice to join with others who acknowledged their sins and accepted the washing of repentance. Jesus had no need to do that, but he joined with others who accepted the baptism by John.

Looking back, I can only marvel at the blessing baptism has been in my life. I also cherish the time of decision and my sense that in the Catholic Church there was "more than meets the eye" – and I am still finding that out day by day by day.

*~ Peace,
Deacon Ross*