

FR RUDY'S REFLECTION
The Baptism of the Lord
SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026



Fr. Rudy Coaquira-Hijale,
MCCJ, pastor

The Beloved Son and Our New Life

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Imagine once again a family gathered around a baptismal font. Light pours through stained glass windows, the priest gently pours water over the head of an infant, and a hush falls over all who witness the moment. It is a scene of grace where heaven touches earth, and a new life in Christ begins. We instinctively sense the beauty of baptism, yet its meaning reaches far deeper than the tender images we hold in our hearts.

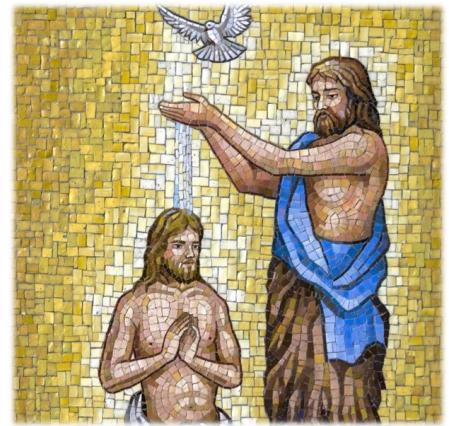
Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, and Matthew's Gospel brings us to the banks of the Jordan River. Before Jesus ever steps into that water, Matthew invites us to consider the world's varied responses to the newborn Messiah. Earlier in his Gospel, Matthew described the visit of the magi, the rejection of Herod, and the indifference of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. These reactions help us understand who Jesus is and why his baptism is so significant.

The magi respond with faith. Guided by a star, they undertook a long and difficult journey because they believed the child they sought was worthy of worship. Their gifts reveal the truth of who Jesus is. Gold proclaims his kingship, frankincense reveals his divinity, and myrrh foreshadows his saving death. They returned home by a different route, changed by their encounter with Christ.

Herod responds with hostility. He fears the rise of a rival king and seeks to destroy the child. Despite his knowledge of the prophecy and his consultation with the chief priests and scribes, his heart remains closed.

The leaders in Jerusalem respond with indifference. They know the Scriptures. They know the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem. Yet they do not go. Their knowledge does not lead to worship or to a searching heart.

These three responses are placed before us intentionally. They prompt us to ask: How do I respond to Christ who enters my life today?



With this contrast in mind, we come to the Jordan River. Jesus approaches John the Baptist and asks to be baptized. John hesitates. How could the sinless Son of God submit to a baptism of repentance? Jesus answers with humility, allowing himself to enter those waters so that he might fill them with divine power. His baptism marks the beginning of his public ministry and reveals the mystery of the Trinity. As he emerges from the water, the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Greek word for baptism means to immerse. In baptism we are immersed into the life of Christ. We die to sin and rise to new life, receiving not only earthly existence but the gift of zoe, the very life of God. Jesus transformed baptism from a symbolic act into a sacrament that truly changes us. The Spirit who descended upon him now descends upon each of us, igniting a fire of love and setting us on a path of discipleship.

Saint John Paul II once reminded us that this sacrament is an immense gift that deserves to be celebrated with the same joy as our birthday. But he also asked whether we truly understand what we have received and whether we allow this gift to shape our lives.

As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, may we renew our gratitude for our own baptism and respond to Christ with the faith of the magi, the courage to follow him, and the joy of knowing we are God's beloved children.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy

OUR LADY
OF GUADALUPE
FAMILY OF PARISHES



HOLY FAMILY CHURCH
ST. BONIFACE CHURCH
ST. JOSEPH CHURCH
ST. LEO THE GREAT
CHURCH
ST. THÉRÈSE LITTLE
FLOWER CHURCH