

“You are my beloved, Son; with you I am well pleased.”

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Once upon a time**, an elderly babysitter took her ‘charge,’ a 5 year old, little boy named Billy, to a river, where a famous preacher was baptizing people. Billy’s parents were so involved in politics and social affairs, they didn’t seem to have much time for Billy. The sitter was deeply concerned for Billy’s spiritual well being.

The preacher takes Billy and, while saying the words of baptism, plunges him under the water. When he pulls him up from the water, the preacher looks him straight in the eye and says, “**Now you count, boy! Before, you didn’t.**” Theologians may argue that last phrase, **BUT** the point I want to make is that when the word **Baptism** appears in the Gospel, it can mean one of three different baptisms.

**1<sup>st</sup>**, it can mean John’s baptism ...with water. It was a baptism of **repentance**. John’s baptism was only the first step in a journey. It was only a sign; only a start; a preparation.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**, it can mean Jesus’ baptism ...with the Holy Spirit. This is a baptism of **rebirth**. It communicates a whole new life. It initiates one’s lasting relationship with the Trinity.

**3<sup>rd</sup>**, is John’s baptism of Jesus himself. Note what took place according to today’s Gospel.

**1<sup>st</sup>** ...the sky opened. **2<sup>nd</sup>** ...the Spirit descended. **3<sup>rd</sup>** ...a voice from heaven said, “**You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased.**”

This baptism is, sometimes, called a baptism of **Revelation**. This is because its importance lies in what it **reveals** to us through the images of the sky, the Spirit, and the voice.

**Consider the 1<sup>st</sup> image** of the ‘open sky.’ In their imaginations, the ancients pictured God as living somewhere above the sky. They imagined the sky to be a kind of barrier, separating the earth from heaven.

This explains Isaiah’s words when he says to God “**Tear the sky open and come down.**”<sup>(Is. 64:1)</sup> The image in today’s gospel of the ‘opening sky’ suggests that God has heard the prophet’s prayer and **is** coming down to save the world. So, a ‘**new era**’ on earth is beginning.

**Consider the 2<sup>nd</sup> image** of the ‘Spirit hovering,’ in the form of a dove, over Jesus and the water. This image is almost identical with the image in the Book of Genesis describing the start of creation. Genesis says, “**God’s Spirit hovered over the water.**” So, the image of the Spirit ‘hovering’ in today’s Gospel at Jesus’ baptism suggests that the ‘new era’ is to be a **NEW creation** or **RE-creation** of the world.

**Now consider the 3<sup>rd</sup> image** of the ‘voice’ from heaven. It says, “**You are my beloved Son.**” These words of God the Father identify Jesus as his Son. Jesus is the “**new Adam**” of the “**new creation**” in this “**new era.**”

Paul compares Jesus and Adam this way:

“The first man, Adam, was created a living being; but the last Adam (Jesus) is the life-giving Spirit.... The first Adam ...came from the earth; the second Adam came from heaven.... Just as we wear the likeness of the man made from the earth (the first Adam), so we **will** wear the likeness of the Man from heaven (the second Adam, Jesus).”<sup>1Cor.15:45-49</sup>

So, the baptism of Jesus is a baptism of great **Revelation**. It reveals a “**new era**” that is just the beginning. This “**new era**” is to be a “**new creation**” of the world in which Jesus is the “**new Adam!**”

**So –“what’s the practical application of all this?” you ask.  
Well, I am glad you asked that question!**

*Well, the new creation that began with John's baptism of Jesus that day in the Jordan ...became a personal reality for each of us in our own baptism.*

*Get a load of this: When we were baptized, in a very real sense,  
...the sky opened above us  
...the Spirit of God descended upon us  
...and a voice said to us,*

***"You are my son (you are my daughter). Today, I have become your Father!"***

*On that day, every person in this room, who is baptized, commenced a relationship with the Trinity that will never cease to be. Because of that 'forever-relationship', each of us is a child of God and an heir to the Kingdom of heaven.*

*Here's how St. Paul describes our baptism:*

*"When you were baptized,  
you were buried with Christ,  
and, in baptism, you were also raised with Christ....  
You were, at one time, spiritually dead because of your sins....  
**BUT**, God has now brought you to life with Christ." Col.2:12-13*

*Paul concludes, saying:*

*"You have been raised to life with Christ,  
so, set your hearts on the things that are in heaven....  
Keep your minds fixed on things **there**, **not** on things **here** on earth....  
"Your **real** life is in Christ  
and when he appears,  
**then** you too will appear with him and share in his glory!" Col. 3:1-4*

***If you remember nothing else from today's homily, remember this:***

*You have been baptized into Christ.  
You have an everlasting relationship with the Trinity.  
You are a child of God and an heir to the kingdom of heaven.*

***So-o, ACT LIKE IT!***

*May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen*