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## **The Baptism of Our Lord Reflection**

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Scriptures do not record the exact words that John the Baptist spoke over Jesus at the precise moment of His baptism in the river Jordan. Perhaps this was intentional in order to shift our attention to the awesome presence of the Trinity, which was so beautifully manifest in this moment. The Son acts in accordance with the Divine Will, the Holy Spirit descends, and God the Father speaks. Jesus reinforces the importance of the presence of the Trinity in the sacrament of Baptism when he gives the command at the end of the Gospel of Matthew to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit [Matthew 28:19]. The presence and authority of the Trinity is central to sacrament of Baptism, as evident in the words that the Catholic Church chose for the baptism formula, “I baptize you in the name of Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Let us take a closer look at the role of the Trinity in baptism.

Just as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as He emerged from the waters of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descends upon us at our baptism bearing gifts that enable us to participate in the life of the Trinity.

The words that God the Father spoke as Jesus as he rose from the water after being baptized in the Jordan are words that are spoken to each of us at our baptism as well by virtue of being adopted children of God. Although most of us do not remember our baptism, we can imagine Our Heavenly Father speaking these words to us at the moment of our baptism: “You are my son. You are my daughter. You are my beloved. With you I am well pleased.” So many times we forget that God is pleased with us. He made us. He made us intrinsically good. He made us in His image. He made us to share eternal life with Him. He loves us. There is nothing we can ever do that will make God love us any less.

What then is the significance of Jesus’ baptism, and by extension, our baptism? It is like the brand that is put into the fire that marks each of us in a special way. For Jesus, this brand or mark was a sign to all who witnessed Jesus’ baptism that He was the Son of God. For us, this brand marks us as belonging to God. Through baptism, God claims us as His own.

Through the waters of baptism we are purified. All trace of sin is removed. Jesus Himself did not need this purification since He was sinless. Jesus’ baptism was the inauguration of His public ministry, so in a sense, Jesus went down into the waters of the Jordan not to have His sins washed away, but in order to take upon Himself the

burden of all our sins that had been washed away. He carried this burden to Calvary, where He paid our debt to the Father in full.

As we contemplate Jesus's baptism, let us do so with praise and thanksgiving for the gift of our own baptism, and with praise and thanksgiving for sublime gift of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and who gives Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist.