

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Bruno II
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, January 10, 2016*

YEAR C - FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Welcome brethren to the first Sunday after the Epiphany. Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, as referenced in our Gospel.

Baptism plays a foundational role in our tradition. Those who believe in the descent of original sin require baptism to eliminate that taint. Others believe that it is an initiatory experience marking one as a member of God's body while loosing the inherent Spirit within man from its slumbering bondage. Many believe that both of these are at once the case.

Baptism, the word is synonymous with rebirth, and renewal. When one is sprinkled or dunked with the baptismal waters, they become a new may or wonam. It is not unusual to hear the phrase, "born again." But baptism involves much more than just water to work. Purposeful intent, along with the intercession of the Holy Spirit is also required.

In our Second Reading, Paul states that "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." What we are seeing here is that John baptized with water, and he carried the requisite purposeful intent, but he could not fully baptize as the Holy Spirit had yet to descend. Our Gospel verifies this. In it John states, "I baptize you with water; but coming is the one stronger than me... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire." In our Second Reading, Paul completes the baptism by laying his hands upon them and with the requisite intent, allowed the Holy Spirit to come upon them, whose effects were immediately evident.

Christ's human nature required John to baptize him with water and purposeful intent. The Holy Spirit descended upon Christ at his baptism, opening the way for the disciples, apostles, and Christians thereafter to effectively perform the sacrament of baptism. Only Christ could open the way for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Most importantly, this was the first full manifestation in this world of the Holy Spirit, in the presence of the Father and the Son. The triplicity of the Godhead coalescing with Christ. Christ represents the potential within us all. Because of our degraded nature in our fallen state, we do not manifest the full effects of baptism as Christ did. But the potential is still there, and it is the sacrament of Baptism which awakens and vivifies our Spirit, making it possible for us to attain Christ-hood.