

Amedeo Rock Fraser's Baptism

December 19, 2010

Gospel, Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."



Nothing on this earth can really compare with the birth of a child. I was there at both Christopher's and Matthew's births. After all the preparation I did with Pat, you couldn't have kept me out of there. And I was awed by the whole experience. We come to realize that each of our children possesses a potential – and a value – which cannot be calculated. We are created in the very image of God. That we can participate in the conception of a human being should amaze us, yet there is another birth that happens in our Christian lives that most of us don't take seriously enough.

In the Gospel, Jesus risked misunderstanding by allowing John to baptize him. It made him appear to somehow needing spiritual cleansing. That wasn't true, as John himself testified. But the fact that Jesus would accept such a risk shows how important He considered Baptism. It would become not only a vehicle of conversion, but of rebirth. As St. Augustine

pointed out, Jesus was baptized not for his sake, but for ours. The waters did not transform Him; He transformed the waters.

As I have said many times before, I love the Sacrament of Baptism. At Baptisms I see people gather their children, family and friends as believers in God for a joyous celebration. Most people really don't put much effort into it and yet we know that Baptism is an important Sacrament that we must do. I love to remind people that we may not realize it, but we come to Baptisms as Apostles of Christ because someone changed our lives by having us baptized, and so we carry on the great commission that Jesus commanded us to do 2000 years ago. Our faith is born out of events of history, things that really happened -- a man about thirty years old, kneeling in the water of a river was baptized by St. John. This happened so that people of all times and places might be baptized into His life, and yes, into His suffering

and death....so that we might then be resurrected with Him to new life. Our children are precious in our eyes. And wanting the very best for our children, we baptize them and give them the indelible spiritual mark of belonging to Jesus. As Amedeo is held over the font, I will bend down looking into his eyes, slowly pouring the water over his little head three times while saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." If we only had eyes to see, we would be astounded by the rolling back of the curtains of time and space, and would behold the most sorrowful and tragic figure of Christ dying on a cross and then a bright, unearthly light breaking out of an empty tomb. All that is done and accomplished in this glorious Sacrament. All of it is poured forth from this transformed water flowing over our heads and it floods our souls with the Holy Spirit. *That* is Baptism.

I have to ask you. Aren't you glad you were baptized?

Pat Harrell asked what he could do to be a good Godfather. I have a few suggestions of what you can do. This week write a letter to Amedeo about what his Baptism meant to you. Then over the years whenever you see Amedeo, remind him of the reasons you know that God loves him. In 25 or 30 years, when Amedeo is having his child baptized, give him the letter you wrote after his Baptism. And please tell Amedeo that you are sure that Grandpa Fraser is there because Grandpa loves Baptisms.

All God's Blessings, Grandpa Fraser