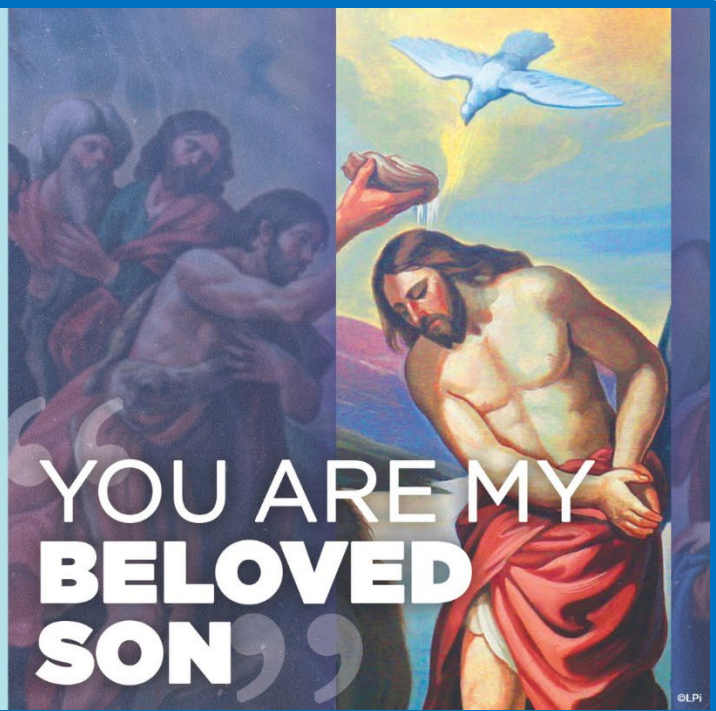


The BAPTISM of the LORD



Dear Friends,

With baptism, Jesus finished his hidden life and started his ministry. Almost from the beginning he had to face a lot of criticism and opposition. We know that nobody goes through life without facing criticism, opposition, misunderstanding, suspicion and even hatred. These are the great pains inside family, church, and community. What happens when our motives and integrity are questioned? Living with judgments takes away joy and even self-confidence. Experiencing hatred, bitterness, and being accused of hypocrisy are not an easy thing to cope with. As Jesus moved about doing his mission, he met every kind of reaction. Sometimes people loved him, other times the same people shouted "Crucify him!" He was both loved and hated, and always there were some who accused him of being the egoist and blasphemer.

I have often wondered how Jesus coped with all of this he had to face. He went around Palestine preaching love and joy, even as people called him a blasphemer and hated him. How did he stay joyful? How did he continue to be self-confident in his mission? How did he handle this? ***"I do the will of my father"- Jesus said.*** Jesus' identity was rooted in God the Father. His courage and his joy were all rooted in something beyond the affirmations or criticisms of public opinion, beyond the judgment of those who hated him. His courage and his joy were all rooted in God the Father, in doing His will.

From the moment of our baptism we are on a mission as Jesus was - to do the will of God, to live daily our faith, to proclaim the Good News. We need to keep this in mind and accept it - there will be always criticism, anger, and sometimes even hatred if we are faithful to God. Jesus experienced this. He warned us that the life of his followers will be no different. As the baptized faithful, we take our identity from God as Jesus did. He is a Son of God and we, as Apostle John says, are God's sons and daughters too.

Peace,
Fr. Krzysztof Kardzis