

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, 2008

“For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
(Rom. 8:14)

The living word of God in this morning's Epistle tells us clearly what is expected of the “children of God”. First, that we “have received the spirit of adoption” of children of God and can call upon God as our Father; and that because “the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit ... that we are heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ.”

Abba, Father! That is the cry of filial love which the Holy Spirit, the divine guest and guide of our souls, places on our lips; it is a cry that penetrates straight to Heaven. But we must allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God. Now these awe-inspiring words need to be pondered upon in prayer. So much depends upon our knowledge of God through our knowledge of Jesus Christ. And this again requires that we are following a way of life based fully on the mind of the Church.



The first of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary reveals to us what is meant by living the mind of the Church — namely the mind of the Kingdom of God. It is *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*. Notice that when John first sees Jesus he says: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” Now the song of the suffering servant of God in Isaiah Lamb speaks of the Lamb that is led to the slaughter: “Like a sheep that is dumb before his shearer, so openeth he not his mouth.”¹ Jesus was crucified on the feast of the Passover and from that moment could only appear as the Passover Lamb. But if we return to his baptism, as Pope Benedict XVI tells us in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, we find here the path which God intends to come for all of us. God so loved us as to give us His only begotten Son, the revelation of the Father's love and mercy. So Jesus becomes the divine model of perfection to which we must aspire; we must endeavour every day to imitate all those virtues: to be mild, humble, chaste, zealous, patient, charitable and resigned.

“Jesus, being baptised and praying, the heavens were opened and the Spirit came down upon Him, like a dove, and a voice from heaven, ‘Thou art my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased’.”² The image of heaven “torn open” shows His

¹ Isaiah 53:7

² Matt. 3:16

communion of will with the Father; His fulfilment of all righteousness opens heaven where God's will is perfectly fulfilled. At the same time the mystery of three persons in One God is beginning to emerge even though its depth can be fully revealed only when Jesus' journey is complete. And here we should realise that our journey must follow in His steps. Our Saviour's journey began from the moment of His being conceived in Mary's Immaculate womb. The Apostle's Creed speaks of Jesus' descent "into hell". This descent not only took place in and after His death, but accompanies Him along His entire journey. He must recapitulate the whole of history from its beginnings — from Adam on, He must go through, suffer through the whole of it, in order to transform it. The Epistle to the Hebrews is particularly eloquent in stressing that Jesus' mission, the solidarity with all of us that He manifested beforehand in His Baptism, includes exposure to the risks and perils of human existence:

“For no where doth He take hold of the Angels: but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might become a merciful and faithful high-priest before God, that He might be a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that, wherein he himself hath suffered and been tempted, he is able to succour them also that are tempted.”³

We, each of us, were baptised by water and the Holy Ghost. From that moment the Spirit could lead us; the first six or seven years of innocence we made no objection. But the war against sin began when we arrived at the years when we could use our reason, and choose our own course. There is so much more we can say about this but it must wait for another time. Meanwhile let us make the *Hail Holy Queen* a favourite prayer in which, as poor banished children of Eve, we never cease to cry out for her loving assistance; and always remain ready and willing to listen to what she asks of us; the Immaculate Heart of Mary is our solace and hope of getting to know her adorable Son, and, through Him, God our Father.

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³ Hebrews 2:16–18