

## The Baptism of the Lord (A)

### Deacon Julio Lara

I have an older sister who is always thinking of innovations and trying to come up with the next best thing. The problem is that she always seems to be a few years behind. A couple of years ago, she came up to me with the greatest idea for a phone application. This is how she described the application... You download an application and if you ever need a ride, you request it in the application, the application would match you with someone close to you, they would pick you up, drop you off at your destination, you would pay through the application, the transaction would be digital and cashless. I stopped for a second for the punchline as I thought she was kidding but she was serious... so I looked at her and said... isn't that called UBER? Two years ago, she was raving about a book they had discussed at work. It was groundbreaking for business, it was the best thing since sliced bread, she was insistent that I needed to read it, it was going to change business and people's lives. I was intrigued so I asked her about the book, she said it was called "The Go Giver" and the premise of the book is that we are to be givers rather than takers, that in business and in life you succeed by giving of yourself, by serving others, by providing value, without expecting anything back and that if you do, everything will take care of itself at the end. As I was looking at a crucifix, I was wondering, have I ever heard that message before, did I know of a person who called us to serve others, to provide value, to give of ourselves without expecting anything in return? So, I looked at her and said... isn't that the story of salvation... isn't that Christianity? Isn't Christ the ultimate Go Giver? *Needless to say, she was not amused.*

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, it marks the end of our Christmas Season and a start to Ordinary time. This celebration is the beginning of our Lord's public ministry; in a way it is like a message of **his** purpose. Our Lord was baptized not because **he** needed it, but because **we do**, by us getting baptized we are sharing in our Lord's mission and purpose. **What is this purpose or mission that we are baptized into?** The prophet Isaiah tells us that the Lord called us for the victory of justice, we were called, we were created for justice, he states that we were formed to be a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring prisoners out of confinement out of the dark. Baptism allows us to participate in that mission, to have that purpose because that is Christ's mission and purpose.

This mission/purpose is freely offered and given to everyone, Acts of the Apostles tells us that God shows no partiality, it is for each and everyone of us. Acts remind us that it all started with the baptism of the Lord and the mission was to spread through all the ends of

the world. This baptism gives us the Holy Spirit which gives us power, heals, and gives us peace. As the Holy Trinity was present at the Baptism of the Lord; **Jesus** being baptized, the **Father** speaking and the **Holy Spirit** descending on the Lord, so is the Holy Trinity present at our baptism, to give us the sacramental grace to become GO GIVERS.

We are all unique, God created us different, we have our own DNA, our own fingerprints, our own internal wiring (as I might call it) a combination of our temperament, personality, skills, charisms, gifts that are so unique that they make us one of a kind. He created each one of us uniquely because each one of us has a particular job to do in the bigger picture, in the mission, and this is your purpose. You were created in such a way that only you can accomplish your particular purpose and job. At baptism you receive the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you put your uniqueness, your gifts to work towards the mission.

If you ever wonder what your mission is, what is your purpose, today's celebration should give you direction. You were created to be a Go Giver... to **go give love**, to **go give peace**, to **go give victory**, **open the eyes of the blind**, **help the prisoners see**. You were created to be the light to the nations. It all sounds very poetic, but we need to make it concrete, we need to make it real, your gifts, talents, temperament, charism, make you unique, because only you can do the job that you were created for... **find it and do it**.

We usually complain about the times that we live in, that our times are worse than previous times, that crime is worse, violence, lack of faith, morals, ethics, manners and there could be arguments made on both sides of that statement but the truth of the matter is that these are the times that we live in. Our creator could have created us in any period, any culture or custom, yet he chose to create you now, **why?**

I believe it is because this is the period in which your uniqueness, your skillset, your gifts, your charisms are needed. It's easy for me to complain about the issues that I see around me, **but what am I doing to fix them?** Our Lord is asking us to participate in his mission, he is giving us his Holy Spirit, to be our guide and honestly to do it for us (we just need to let him). Our purpose is to be givers, to give without expecting anything in return. He is asking us **to be justice**, **victory**, to **open the eyes of the blind**, **to be the light of the world**. Take up his challenge, see what is *needed* the most in your circle of influence and be what is *needed*. If you feel that there is darkness near you... then where is your light? Be light. Where is there a need for peace, for justice, for freedom? Be a go-giver there. Let's follow our Lord's example and become the Go-Giver we were made for... **Let's say as St. Joan of Arc said, "I am not afraid; I was made for this"**.