

What is the most important day of your life?

Have you seriously considered this?

So many to choose from

Day you were born

Married

A father or mother

Ordained

Accepted at the college I desired?

So many milestones in our lives

But which was, or will be, the MOST important?

The day of our baptism

This is the day we are born for

We are created for one reason

God sends us into the world for one reason

To be with him forever

And that gate is opened on the day of our baptism

The day we are grafted onto Christ as priest, prophet and king

When we are chosen by God for a specific mission

This being chosen is also part of our Judean- Christian heritage

Isaiah speaks of one the Lord will send

My chosen one, with whom I am pleased

Upon whom I have sent my spirit

This is part of Isaiah's writings known as *The Servant Songs*

One who will bring justice

Not harsh punishment

A bruised reed he will not break

A smoldering wick he will not smother

The mission of the servant is given by God

Not chosen by man

His servant will come to bring justice to the nations

Not only to rescue Israel

We see this universal aspect in our reading from Acts

Peter begins *'In truth I see'*

At this time an observant Jew like Peter

Would have no dealings with a Gentile

But Peter now sees God shows no partiality

And Peter speaks to all those gathered in Cornelius' house

Peter was sent here

Directed by an angel of God

His mission was to fulfill the long-standing prophecy

The Messiah would be a light to all the nations

He taught them all Jesus did

Beginning with the baptism John preached

And how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit

Many things in Christianity existed before Christ walked the earth

But they were not the same after

Baptism existed before Christ

But it is not what we experience

Before Christ it was a symbol of repentance

Water has a long history as an instrument in salvation history

The flood of Noah

The parting of the Red Sea at the start of the Exodus

The crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land

Again and again water being withheld

And the plain being turned into a wasteland

Or water flowing into a desert

And creating a land of blessing and abundance

John's baptism was one of repentance

Something Jesus did not need

But it is something we need to receive Him fully

I have baptized you with water

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

Jesus' incarnation, his becoming human, was not only to be like us

Ultimately, it was so he could step into our shoes

So he could take the place of sinners

So he could accomplish what John's baptism only symbolizes

Water washes us clean

But it cannot wash away sin

This only happens when sin itself dies

Jesus' baptism by John is his first identification with man's sin

It is also his first step to defeat it

And when he undergoes his passion and death

Sin itself is killed

And when he rose from the dead

Sin was left behind

Defeated

Jesus enters the water of the Jordan not to be sanctified

He enters it to sanctify

So baptism is no longer only a symbol, an outward sign

But it is an effective vehicle of the Holy Spirit

Bringing inner cleansing, rebirth and transformation

It is now a sacrament through which we are conformed to Christ

As priest, prophet and king

This is the office of all baptized Christians

Priests

One who prays for others, intercedes and offers sacrifices

Are we doing that?

Not as a ministerial priest

That is the ordained role

It grows out of our organic role as baptized people

Are we a people of prayer?

Do I pray for my children, my parents?

Do I pray for my students, my teachers?

For my spouse?

Speaking with someone today, this particularly came up

The duty of a husband is to get their wife into heaven

The duty of a wife is to get her husband into heaven

Something I tell those I am preparing for marriage

I don't judge who has the harder job

And we have to admit that at times there will be kicking and screaming along the way

But first and foremost, that is the duty of a spouse

Do I pray before meals?

At home, with the kids?

How about in public?

Do you know how powerful a simple sign of the cross is in public?

Are we participating fully in the Mass?

The highest prayer we have as Catholic Christians

A full, active participation is not doing something

It is having an understanding, an awareness of what is going on

And if I don't have a clue what is going on

Or why we this or that

How about studying it?

**Either together or by yourself, investigate and discover the
richness of this prayer**

That is being a priest

And we are all called to be a prophet

Not Abraham or Isaiah or Noah

But Bill and Sandy and Tom and Sue or whatever

To speak God's Word

Whether popular or not

To be a prophet often means we will be persecuted

Christ was crucified

It is not a popularity contest

So often we hear keep your religion to yourself

But to be a prophet is not to be ashamed

As St Anthony tells us

Preach always

And when necessary use words

Do your kids know you are men and women of prayer?

Sending them to Catholic school or CCD are important

But they are not enough

They are not even the first step

We are called to live our faith

At home, at work, at school, always

This is being a prophet

And we are all called to be a king

To lead others to God

To help others properly order their lives

To give good counsel when asked

Directing the home to holiness

To offer ourselves in leadership and in service

Parish council, finance council, education commission

Lecturing, ushering, youth ministry

Helping beautify the churches or grounds

Decorating, music ministry

This is being a king

When we exercise our ministries

When we live our lives as priest, prophet and king

We are grafting our lives onto that of Christ

The Priest, The Prophet and The King

That is why baptism is the most important day of our life

We are baptized into the death of Christ

So we can live with him forever

We identify with him not as a miracle worker

Not as a healer

Not as a perfect human

But as our savior

So we are transformed into him

And share in his mission to transform the world

Living lives of priest, prophet and king

We are called, baptized and anointed

So one day we too might hear these words

My beloved, with you I am well pleased