**The Curious Catholic**

**Q. *Why did Jesus need to be “baptized”?***

This Sunday we celebrate the baptism of Jesus. But why did Jesus need to be baptized? Isn’t the purpose of a Christian baptism to remove original sin and become a member of the family of God through the name of the holy trinity? Wasn’t Jesus already free of original sin and a member of the trinity?

The answers to the last two questions are both yes; so, let’s look at the why. What we need to know is that the baptism of Jesus, wasn’t a Christian baptism at all. When Jesus was baptized, Christianity was not yet started. As a matter of fact, John the Baptist would be the one to start preparing and recruiting those who would later become the first Christians. The baptism that Jesus participated in was a ritualistic Jewish tradition where Jewish people would come to repent of their sins and be purified. It would have actually been considered scandalous for a gentile to participate in this ritual.

But even though it was a fulfillment of a Jewish tradition, the baptism of Jesus has a strong significance in the Christian faith. Last week we celebrated the feast of the Epiphany. If you look up the word “epiphany” in the dictionary, you will see that it means “an illuminating discovery or revelation.” It was revealed to the wisemen that the baby Jesus was the long-awaited king that the Israelites were waiting centuries for. This week is the 2nd part of the epiphany. Jesus entered the river Jordan only known to those around as a common carpenter. But then John lowered him in the water and when He emerged, God Himself revealed who Jesus truly was. *“After He was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and settling on Him, and behold, a voice from the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”* (Matthew 3:16-17)

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*\*If you have any questions you would like answered for the Curious Catholic article, please submit your questions to Terri Riesselmann (email on front of bulletin) or drop them in the prayer request box at the back of church.*