

Crowds, Lines, and Responding To The Power Of Our Baptism.

My uncle sent me a Christmas card which mentioned that he was with my brother at a Rolling Stones Concert. When we think of this infamous rock and roll band from the 60's, we often associate it with large crowds that continue to follow Mick Jagger and company. But the interesting nuance about this concert was that my brother was in VIP seating, while my uncle and aunt were at the top of the arena--in the 'nosebleed seats'!

Jesus too was experienced with crowds. When he made his way to be baptized by John the Baptist, a great crowd and line had formed. But Jesus did not seek out any special treatment, rather, he mixed with the flock and got to know them—the tax collectors, the poor, the sick and the sinners.

John told the crowds that Jesus was the more powerful one, that John was not worthy of untying Jesus' sandals. Given this description of Jesus, it would appear that he would not even need to go through the baptism in the Jordan. But this is the big surprise, Jesus used his power in a humbling way by meeting people in their own situation and he waited his turn to be baptized! He stayed the course with the flock which become the path of his entire life and ultimately led to the cross. Even at Calvary with the angry crowds, he risked bodily harm and even death to serve God.

Let's take a closer look at Jesus' baptism to get an indication of what is at hand. When the dove came to rest over Jesus, God's voice said, "You are my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." This statement indicated that God was pleased that his son had already turned to serve the crowds!

God looks to us as beloved as well, but we are to do something with the power of our baptism. There is a parish pandemic story that I heard recently. The setting was a larger grocery store, the lines were long because food was in short supply. Unfortunately, a woman in her walking stroller lost her balance and toppled to the ground. Most shoppers turned the other way, but a parishioner and another person went over to console the woman while the management was able to call for help and get the woman back on her feet. And the end of this story may very well be, "God was pleased with the two responders."

*JEB
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Baptism of Jesus*