

God's Mission for Us

When an artist begins a painting, she or he has the end result in mind. The final result, the inspiration, is what sets the artist in motion. Aristotle called this ideal the “final cause” because it was the first thing in mind (the inspiration) and the last to be realized (the final product).

When God gives life to a human at the moment of conception, he does so with a final mission in mind for that child. He gives life freely, but not without a plan.

You and I are not the result of a coincidence or a chain of chemical reactions. We began at the heart of a loving, purposeful God. God willed you and wants you! You are who you are because of God's infinite love. He created you as a unique and divinely designed human being. His purposeful hand reached out and lifted you into existence just the way you are.

Yet your creation is not merely in the past but a reality that touches you now. God holds you and keeps you in every moment of your life. With every breath and movement, God is sustaining you. Your life is a loving project of God today.

Like St. John the Baptist who was created and called to be Jesus' cousin and prepare the way for him, so you have a call to prepare the way for Jesus to enter your world. How you do that in your lifetime as well as how you do that today is something unique to you. Your life has a mission! What is it? —Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

For Reflection

Do I have a strong sense of God's mission for my life?

What might be some of the elements?

How have I benefited from other people who have been generous with their own mission?



Piece: *The Baptism of Christ*,
circa 1482

Artist: Pietro Vannucci
Location: Sistine Chapel

*Before birth the LORD called me,
from my mother's womb he gave me my name.*

Isaiah 49:1

Calendar

Monday

June 25

Weekday

2 Kgs 17:5–8,
13–15a, 18
Mt 7:1–5

Tuesday

June 26

Weekday

2 Kgs 19:9b–11, 14–21,
31–35a, 36
Mt 7:6, 12–14

Wednesday

June 27

Weekday

2 Kgs 22:8–13; 23:1–3
Mt 7:15–20

Thursday

June 28

Weekday

2 Kgs 24:8–17
Mt 7:21–29

Friday

June 29

*Sts. Peter and Paul,
Apostles*

Acts 12:1–11
2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18
Mt 16:13–19

Saturday

June 30

Weekday

Lam 2:2, 10–14, 18–19
Mt 8:5–17

Sunday

July 1

*Thirteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*
Wis 1:13–15; 2:23–24
2 Cor 8:7, 9, 13–15
Mk 5:21–43 or
5:21–24, 35b–43

Dear Padre,

We are told that we are baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection, and that baptism is necessary for our salvation. But why was Jesus baptized?

Jesus was not baptized in the Jordan River for the same reasons we are baptized today. Exactly why Jesus received baptism is known to him alone. Your question will be one that goes into the “everything you wanted to ask Jesus when you meet him in heaven” category. But scholars studying this question have reasonable assumptions about why Jesus requested baptism.

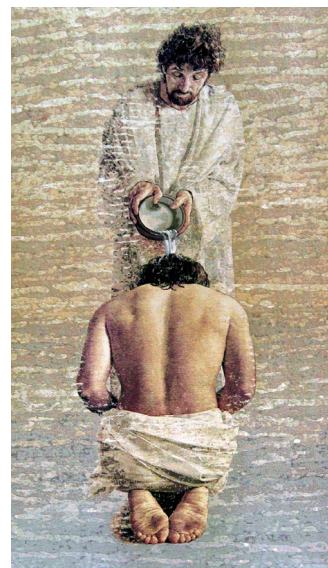
When Jesus requested baptism from John, he wanted to demonstrate that he identified with his people's search for God. Scholars speculate that after years of performing the duties of home and the carpenter's trade, Jesus had become increasingly conscious of his life's mission. It was time to seize the moment and begin his ministry. John balked, thinking he should be accepting baptism from Jesus—the long-awaited one. But Jesus prevailed, and a voice from heaven ratified his action. “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

After Jesus' baptism, John's mission was accomplished. Jesus took center stage. Identifying with his people's sinfulness, Jesus allowed himself to be baptized to demonstrate his solidarity with the people, signaling the beginning of the Messianic Age that John had promised.

We know the rest of the story. Later, Jesus would commission his apostles to baptize all nations. This would be a baptism of water and the Spirit, signifying that the baptized had found Jesus and were living in forgiveness and freedom.

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SUPANEE HICKMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK



A Word From Pope Francis

That is the purpose of our mission: to identify the material and immaterial needs of the people and try to meet them as we can. Do you know what agape is? It is love of others, as our Lord preached. It is not proselytizing, it is love. Love for one's neighbor, that leavening that serves the common good.

—Interview with *La Repubblica*, October 1, 2013