

Today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. And it is a wonderful feast because it provides us opportunity to consider the promises of our own baptism.

I love the Hebrew language.... I struggle with the pronunciations but I love it just the same. So many terms and short sayings so simply spoken ...but have a very deep and far reaching meaning.

One such phrase and I have mentioned it before is the phrase Tikkun Alam. which is an Old Testament phrase that means "repairing the world "

And while it is a term that has its origins with the prophets of the Old Testament...it is a term that has a great deal of relevance for all of us today

Tikkun Alam... repairing our broken world... what could be more relevant than that

It expresses the belief that faith whether the Jewish faith of long ago or our Catholic faith today has to be more than simply knowing the rules and the laws...

Faith has to mean something... It has to be more than knowledge...our faith has to shape our lives

Our faith needs to be Tikkun alam

In the First Reading of today Prophet Isaiah speaks of the God's chosen Servant, the promised one who will bring justice to the world. This servant goes about the mission in a way that distinguishes him from all the other prophets:

He does not cry out in the streets like the other prophets but transforms the nations by his example than by words.

The servant will restore the nations of the world to a right relationship with God.

The servant is an example of Tikkun Alam

And in our Gospel reading today Jesus is baptized. He doesn't need to become baptized, but through His example, he leads others into the baptismal waters to become transformed and reconciled

Through His Baptism He invites us into His own mission.

A mission is Tikkun Alam... A new covenant... A covenant based on love... on forgiveness...about becoming right with God

And so Jesus Christ is Tikkun alam

As Catholics we are the very personification of Christ's mission and through our own baptism, we are commissioned into a life of ministry, a life of love and service to others...into a faith that is strongly rooted in justice

This is why our relationship with God can never simply be, just about "God and me." Our faith will always be about God and WE

The stronger our relationship with God becomes, the more of humankind become part of that relationship too.

Baptism into our faith means more than simply becoming a member of a church but a commitment to the kind of justice that the prophets of the Old Testament called Tikkun Alam

And today this is a daunting task

How do we even begin to address the issues that divide us: politics, gun control, mandatory healthcare, world hunger, genocide, civil rights, gender and social inequality ...and on and on

But part of Tikkun Alam is admitting that we are broken in the first place... That we live in a world that is far from perfect ... a world that requires our due diligence to fix it

That is why today's feast of the Baptism of the Lord is really a celebration of our own Baptism and a reminder that we called to be in relationship with the very people that Jesus came to save!

Jesus wading into the baptismal waters in today's gospel reminds us all that our baptism is not simply an event from our past, a simple rite of passage that happened long ago,

Our baptism is an action that defines who we are today

... and who we must still be willing to become.

Baptism is a sacrament that makes us important stakeholders in Christ's mission of hope and love...and to all the changes that come with it

....including fixing a broken world

Tikkun Alam means that we must become the very change that we hope and pray for.

We need to be...Tikkun Alam.

God Bless