

A Letter from Fr. Patrick Kizza

January 11, 2026

Dear brothers and Sisters, Happy New 2026.

Today, we celebrate the baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ marks a turning point in the Gospel and in our understanding of who God is and who we are. When Jesus steps into the waters of the Jordan, He does not do so because He needs repentance. John the Baptist recognizes this immediately and said, *"I need to be baptized by you."* Yet Jesus insists, saying, *"Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* In this humble act, Jesus identifies fully with humanity, entering the waters that symbolize our sin and brokenness, even though He Himself is without sin. He sanctifies the waters so that all who follow Him may be made new.

As Jesus rises from the Jordan, the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father's voice proclaims, *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* This moment reveals the Trinity in a powerful way: the Son standing in the water, the Spirit descending, and the Father speaking love and affirmation. It is not only a revelation of Jesus' identity, but a promise about ours. What is spoken over Jesus is echoed over every baptized Christian.

Christian writers have long reflected on this mystery. St. Gregory of Nazianzus wrote, *"Christ is illumined; let us shine forth with him. Christ is baptized; let us go down with him, that we may also rise with him."* Baptism, then, is not a ritual of the past but a living participation in the life of Christ. When we are baptized, we die to sin and rise to new life, clothed in Christ Himself.

In our own baptism, the same Spirit descends upon us—not visibly, but truly. St. Paul reminds us, *"You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but a spirit of adoption"* (Romans 8:15). Through baptism, we are no longer strangers to God; we are beloved sons and daughters. Henri Nouwen beautifully expressed this truth when he wrote, *"The greatest truth of our lives is that we are the Beloved."* Before we achieve anything, before we prove ourselves, God already calls us His own.

What, then, is our role as baptized Christians? First, we are called to live our identity as baptized sons and daughters of God who is Love. In the same way, our worth does not come from success, status, or recognition, but from being loved by God. Second, baptism commissions us for mission. Just as Jesus leaves the Jordan and begins to preach, heal, and serve, we are sent into the world to reflect God's love through acts of justice, mercy, and compassion, feeding the hungry, forgiving those who hurt us, standing for truth, and caring for the forgotten.

Finally, baptism calls us to renewal. Each day we are invited to "step back into the Jordan," choosing again to turn away from sin and to live in the freedom of God's children. In a world that often defines people by fear, failure, or division, baptized Christians are witnesses to a deeper truth: we are God's beloved sons and daughters, and the Spirit rests upon us. From the waters of baptism, a lifelong journey begins—one marked by grace, purpose, and the unshakable love of the Father.