

**PASTORAL LETTER:  
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD  
~January 11, 2025~**

**My dear Little Flower,**

Today, as we celebrate the **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**, the Church invites us to stand at the waters of the Jordan and to remember who we are: a people claimed by God, beloved before we ever earned it, and sent forth with purpose. It is a fitting and grace-filled moment for us, because this year we also stand at the waters of our own story—one hundred years of life, one hundred years of faith, one hundred years of grace.

In the year 1926, the first Mass was celebrated here—at a small, humble mission church. There were no grand structures, no long-established programs, no certainty about what the future would hold. There was simply faith. Visiting priests from the surrounding vicinity came to offer the Eucharist, and a small community gathered—ordinary people with extraordinary trust in God. From that simple beginning, the rest, as we often say, became history.

But history, in the life of the Church, is never just a record of dates and events. It is a **living story**—a story of love poured out in baptisms and weddings, of faith carried through trials and triumphs, of service offered quietly and faithfully through generations. It is the story of mothers and fathers in faith who taught children to pray, who sacrificed to build and sustain a parish, who believed deeply that God was doing something holy here, even when they could not yet see the full picture.

Today, on this feast, we remember that **our parish was born the same way Jesus' public life began**: not with spectacle, but with surrender. At the Jordan, Jesus steps into the water—not because He needs

baptism, but because He chooses solidarity with His people. At our founding, this parish stepped into the waters of trust—trusting that God would be faithful, trusting that love would endure, trusting that what was planted in humility would bear fruit in time.

For one hundred years, that trust has not been in vain.

We are the inheritors of a beautiful legacy. The faith we live today was handed to us—prayed for, worked for, protected, and loved into existence. Our task now is not merely to preserve what was given, but to **build upon it**, to let the same Spirit who hovered over the waters at Jesus' baptism—and at our parish's birth—continue to renew and guide us.

This centennial year is not only a celebration of the past; it is a recommitment to the future. As baptized people, and as a consecrated parish, we are called again to hear the Father's voice: "*You are my beloved.*" And having heard it, we are sent—sent to love, to serve, to welcome, to heal, and to witness.

May this holy year deepen our gratitude, strengthen our unity, and renew our courage. And may we honor our fathers and mothers in faith not only by remembering them, but by living with the same generosity, trust, and hope that shaped the first hundred years of our story.

With gratitude for the past, faith in the present, and hope for all that is still to come, I remain,

your parish priest,

**Fr. JC Merino**

Pastor, Church of the Little Flower

January 5, 2026