

You are my Beloved Child



In the baptism service, after the candidates have declared that they turn to Christ, the priest says this prayer over them (and sometimes makes the sign of the cross on their foreheads):

*“May almighty God **deliver** you from the powers of darkness, **restore** in you the image of his glory, and **lead** you in the light and obedience of Christ”*

This prayer for deliverance sums up the whole of baptism. In these words three separate actions are described:

- ❖ We are delivered
- ❖ We are restored
- ❖ We are led

DELIVERED: After Jesus was baptised by John and then began his work in Palestine, he healed people and delivered them from evil. This was in response to their faith. When we say that we renounce evil and turn to Christ, our deliverance begins.

RESTORED: The Bible and the Church teach us that human beings are created in the image of God and that we are meant to grow into the likeness of God. But we have lost sight of this, as you can tell by looking around the world and our own society. Another way of describing the image of God is to say that we are meant to be sons and daughters of God. Baptism restores us as children of God and restores the lost possibility of the image of God in us. We see this when Jesus was baptised. A voice from heaven declared: **“You are my Beloved Son, in you I am delighted”**. In Baptism this same voice addresses each one of us.



As Christians we believe that if you want to know what it means to be a child of God or to be the image of God then look at the life and teaching of Jesus. He lived it out but also, through his baptism and through his death and resurrection he created a way that we could be restored as his brothers and sisters.

“...we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life”
Romans 6.4

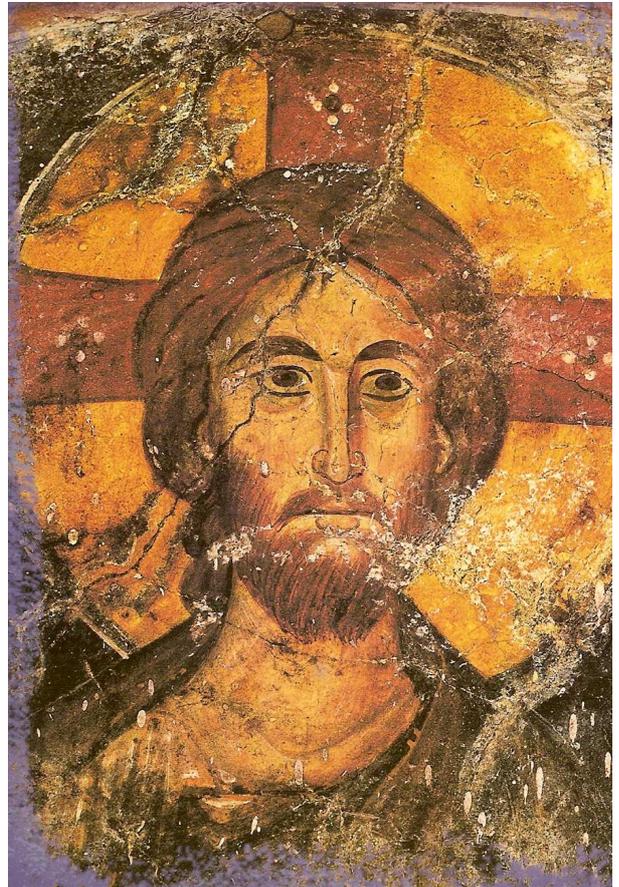
LED: Baptism is the start of a journey in which we walk “in the light and obedience of Christ”. To obey means to follow Jesus’ example and teaching. We can do this because he is a light shining in the darkness, shining in our hearts, to show us the way but also to fill our innermost being with light and joy and peace.

“But I say to you, ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”
Matthew 5.45f

How can he be present in our hearts when he died nearly 2000 years ago? That is a great mystery. But it is made possible by the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit which descended upon Jesus at his baptism and the same Spirit which is called down upon us at our baptism. It is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all light and truth.

“He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being”

Hebrews 1.3



Christ the Lover of Humanity

‘For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness”, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’.
2 Corinthians 4.6

