

Live daily in the light of baptism
By Bishop Milan Lach, SJ, of Parma

If you are truly following Jesus, you are likely battling with the things of this world, including with your selfishness or with your lifestyle. On the other hand, and at the same time, you are also drawn to imitate Jesus, his sweetness, and to follow him. On this day before us, with all the many wonderful sights to see, try to see everything from the spiritual point of view.

How can we see from the spiritual point of view? We can do this by reading and being encouraged daily by the Word of God, by the Gospel.

In today's Gospel (Jn 8:12-20), Jesus speaks about himself. He uses wonderful words. He says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8: 12).

What is this "light of life"? Or rather, who is this "light of life"? It's Jesus.

We receive this "light of life" at our baptism. Most of us do not recall our own baptisms, though it was the most important point of our life.

Our destiny is to live forever in the light, in the light of the eternal Word, in the light of eternal life, and this is something wonderful for us. Each one of us, every baptized man and woman, of all cultures and races, has the dignity of an opportunity to live with God forever, and this is wonderful!

Our Christian life is like a seed. We plant a seed in the soil and water it and, given the right conditions, it will grow. This is the Christian life: to let the seed of eternal light, the light of the Spirit, which is placed in us at baptism, to grow.

To live in this light every day — in your family, at your job, in school, wherever it is that you spend your days — you no doubt face conflict. But conflict is not necessarily bad. Sometimes it takes conflict to grow deeper in faith. Conflicts help us and challenge us to try to be really like Jesus and to ask, "Jesus, what should I do in my situation?"

Sometimes, to live the Gospel in the light of our baptism, we enter into conflicts — not to create fights or scandals— but to protect the truth, to protect life and love. This is how we imitate Jesus.

Today, we are invited to follow Jesus, to walk with him. Today, we will walk all day and we will likely grow tired. In those moments of fatigue, think about how we are all followers of Jesus and that, through this difficulty, we need to go to the heart of Jesus.

+Bishop Milan

This Voice of the Shepherd is an excerpt from the homily Bishop Lach delivered during a Divine Liturgy at the chapel of the Congregation for Eastern Churches May 16, during Horizons' pilgrimage to Rome in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Eparchy of Parma.

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