



“He went up immediately from the water, and behold,  
the heavens were opened” (Mathew 3:16)

### **June 2014: Reflection: Mathew 3:13-17**

The heavens are opened! The Spirit of God descends upon us! This is the Good News of our salvation that we specially celebrate during the season of Easter and Pentecost. Through the death and Resurrection of Jesus, the door to heaven has been opened for us, and we have access to the Father in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit allows us to call out to Him, “Abba! Father!”

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan in order to institute the Sacrament of Baptism as the permanent means of participation in His death and Resurrection. He died for our sins, and in baptism we join with Him in this very death so as to become completely dead to sin. As St. Paul asks, “How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” Having died with Him, we are to have nothing to do with the works of darkness, but we are given the grace to rise with Him into a new life, a life filled with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is of course no mere human tradition. It is not just an opportunity to make a public profession of faith in the community. In every baptism, it is not man but God who is the primary agent, He “whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire”. However, this does not mean that we can simply be passive about our baptism. On the contrary, we must cooperate with the grace of baptism by actively giving ourselves completely to God and to His Kingdom. This is why the Church asks candidates (or parents and godparents) to express their personal commitment to renounce evil and to follow Christ by making certain promises. On Easter and on other occasions we renew these same baptismal promises; we recommit ourselves to living a new life in Christ. As St. Paul writes, “consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus”. In this way, a baptized person is called to be a radically different person, a “new man”, a privileged member of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people”. He is now a person consecrated for Christian worship.

Every Pentecost, Jesus Youth celebrates its Recommitment Day. This is a special time when we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, offer our lives once again to Christ and His Church by recommitting ourselves to the Jesus Youth lifestyle and spirituality. The call to live as a Jesus Youth is a specific call that is experienced within the fundamental call of our baptism. As the movement matures in the crystallization and development of its formation, it is also important for each one of us to mature in our personal discovery of this call to be a Jesus Youth. May the same Spirit Who founded Jesus Youth 30 years ago, Who has beautifully led the movement to so many parts of the world, Who has called each one of us personally in our baptism and in the movement, help us now to go deeper, to discover the full significance of our call, and to recommit our lives once again to God through the Jesus Youth movement.

O Mary, you were a young woman who generously and unreservedly responded to God’s call and were filled with the Holy Spirit. Pray for us that we may actively cooperate with the work of the Spirit in our lives.