

2075 years ago today, Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon River. Crossing this river into Italy north of Rome with an army, broke the standing orders of Rome, which determined their rulers and armies could not enter, invade. It meant insurrection. Civil war breaks out. Julius Caesar will famously say, “the die is cast” after crossing. ‘Cross the Rubicon’, ‘the die is cast’ still spoken today, it can’t be undone, passing a point of no return. Rome ruled the world, Julius Caesar now becomes dictator. His son Caesar Augustus -what Jesus and the early Church dealt with and he was responsible for many Christian deaths. Gets worse years later with Julius Caesar’s great grandson, Nero, murders Sts. Peter and Paul, martyrs countless Christians.

We cannot lose sight how our Lord in every year, will use evil, civil unrest, wars, evil times, even plague for His good, loving purpose for His people, for you. The angels on the Bethlehem hills were announcing at invasions, and now Jesus, almost 2000 years ago, in the Jordan river, baptized, war breaks out, immediately following, Jesus faces temptation with Satan. The “die is cast” in baptism, not for in man’s vain decisions, but Jesus desire to have you. He doesn’t need to be baptized, but makes baptism, baptism. It says, **fulfilling all righteousness**. He stands in the waters to bring, connect your baptism to His baptism, righteousness.

So a new year underway. Each new year we have this weird, irrational tendency to begin a new year with the assumption that things will truly be new, different, better. That calendar changes equates to humanity changes.

With a new year, it may be helpful to remember painfully, honest truths -that we do well to see how this ties into why Jesus is baptized.

Remember. You, me made a whole lot of foolish decisions in 2025. As we get older, flip the calendar years we struggle to realize the best, healthiest life is one of honesty, humility, virtue, faith, love, forgiveness flowing from Christ. The only real, true life to live: centered on Christ. Yet knowing all this, you still told countless half-truths and lies. You committed adultery in your heart; slandered with your tongue, wasted so much time, rotted your brains looking at screens. You didn’t pass a single day, not even an hour, in complete service to God and neighbor. God be praised you did some good. Countlessly, the good you wanted to do, you didn’t. The evil you didn’t want to do, you did. You’re still the same sinner you were a year ago.

What to do? Only one thing to do: throw yourself upon the mercy of Jesus, who delights in forgiving failures, rejoices to embrace foolish sinners, stands in the waters of baptism to bring you daily regeneration, daily works, baptized into His death and resurrection; to bring, His righteousness in your baptismal life.

Remember the false bravado of man, you buy into the self-help slogans. You’re addicted to think you’re better than other people who sin differently than you do. So individualist for your plans, your happiness, to sharply rebuke any in

your way; to think, you're so complete, even without God, pastors, spouse, others.

There's only one thing to do: throw yourself upon the mercy of Jesus, who eats with tax-collectors, sinners, people who think they're great, who lovingly stomps out our self-sufficiency every chance He gets. You can't do it. That's why He stands in the waters that you are baptized, that He is your life, He names you, He's your only source to make it each day and brings you into a family.

Remember, you are weaker than you think. You've this tendency to assume you're so strong. That's dumb and you know it. It has gotten you into many messes and you have hurt people because of it. You think: "I am strong enough to resist this temptation"—and, minutes later. Think, "My commitment to God, to the straight and narrow is strong" but your heart tells a far darker story. You listen to the world, even your inner voice and get intoxicated on you, your "strength." The world and devil play into this. You are weaker than you think. Daily you walk by dangers that could totally consume your life. He stands in the waters, is baptized to make you His, that baptized you now have a Father, you can now pray Our Father. Were it not for your Father's grace and his angels working overtime, you'd have long since been destroyed or destroyed yourself.

There's only one thing to do: throw yourself upon the mercy of Jesus. Come to the reality, you're weak, then you see He is your strength. He protects you from the forces of evil, delivers on His promise to be with you always.

Looking forward to a new year with joy, what may come, look forward to each day your God gives you to breathe, remember life is not about you. Your identity is determined by who He is, not from what you do or think. You are a baptized child of God. Spend the rest of your life pondering that. Your entire identity flows from your baptism because one day Jesus stood in those waters and you baptized, joining you to Him.

Remember. Life is all about Jesus the Christ and it's about your neighbor. Everything else is by and large vanity. Love your neighbor. Trust in Jesus. He will see you through. Live trusting your baptism.

For just as when Word, Spirit got together in the beginning, launched first day of creation with water of life; so Word, Spirit launched the first day of your new life, your new year, your new day, getting up each day anew as His baptized child. And one year will come, when your baptism, His work is complete, like with Ron, a perfect you, His new creation for eternity. That's why Jesus came. Why He came to the Jordan. Why He was baptized. That's why He baptized you. His gift, His works delivered in your own baptism.

You have everything given to you at the font. The die is cast. The promise God spoke in heaven at your baptism is still good and always will be.