

My Life. HIS STORY

You are no longer alone when you discover your true identity.

by DEACON JIM MCFADDEN

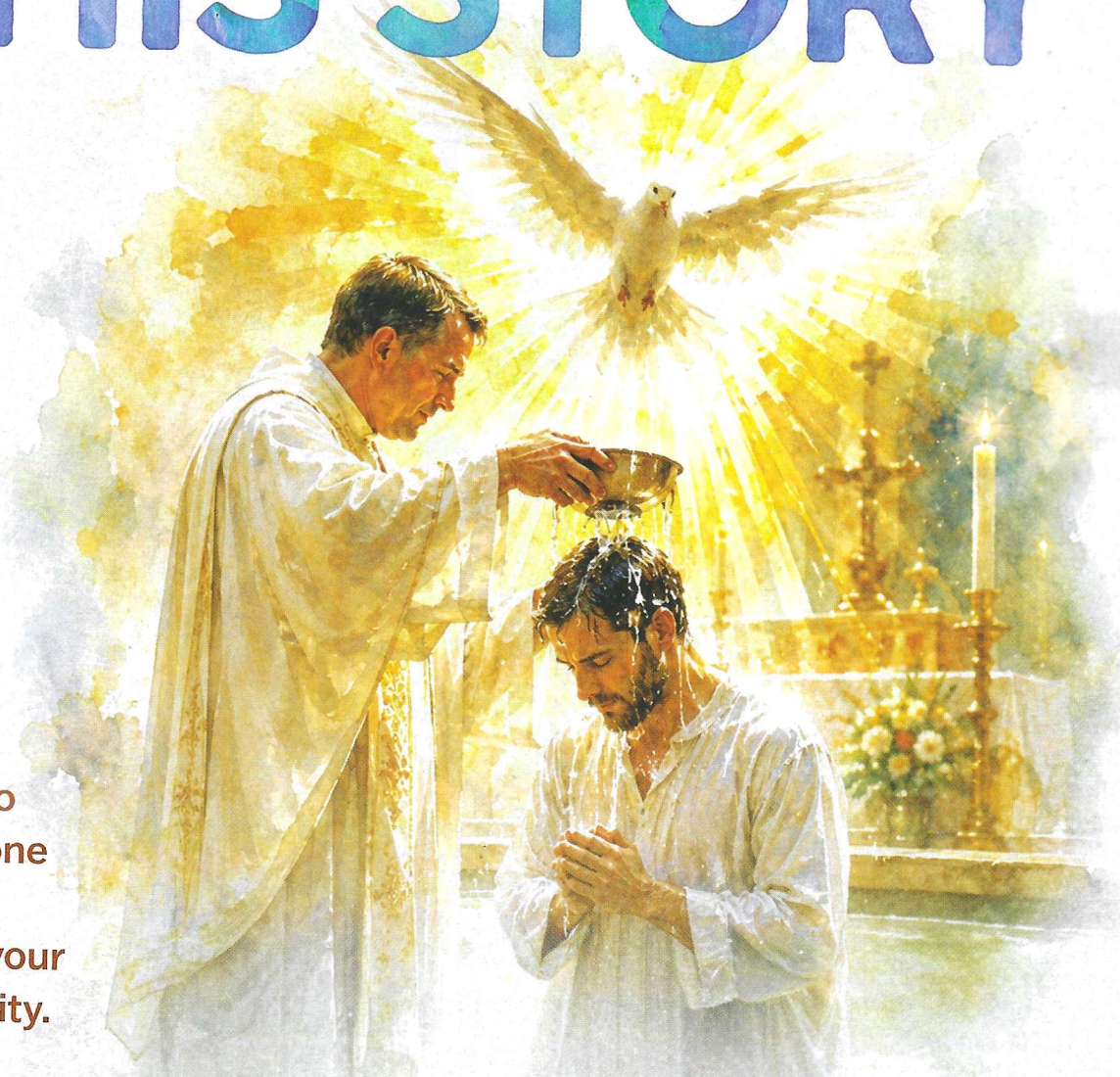
Baptisms have a special place in my heart as it is one of my cherished ministries as a deacon. Many years ago, on a missionary visit to Sumbawanga, Tanzania, I had the privilege of baptizing over 60 children and adults during Holy Mass, which was celebrated in

Swahili. While I didn't know the language, the presiding Benedictine priest was astute enough to give me a cheat card to repeat the Trinitarian formula, which I eventually had memorized after several Baptisms.

Most Important Day

The reason it holds such a special place is that, according to our

departed beloved Pope Francis: "The day of our Baptism is the most important day of our life." How so? At Baptism, we are initiated into the mystical Body of Christ, the Church, and, as members, we therefore become beloved children of God. Our body now becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit as we begin our journey in Christ Jesus to live in the Kingdom of God,



moving towards our final destiny, which is eternal life with the Triune God, the Communion of Saints, and all the choirs of angels. That's why Baptism is the most important day of our lives; everything else is now a footnote. In short, Baptism establishes our identity as a new creation centered in Christ Jesus. Our life is now about Him and not about us.

This is the central motif of the Catholic spiritual life, which is so contrary to our culture, which is so self-centered: it's all about me and my choice. There was a billboard in Southern California that appeared during the euthanasia debate in 2024, which blared: "My life, my death, my choice." That's the dominant consciousness of our society, which is all about me. But that attitude is directly contrary to the attitude expressed in the Bible, as revealed in the Baptism of our Lord Jesus, in which Jesus comes to the full realization of who He is in relation to His Father, His Beloved.

Revealing the Divine Reality

We have heard that when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River, "the Heavens were opened." (Matthew 3:16) It is a symbolic way of saying that the divine reality is now being revealed. If the Heavens remain closed, what we experience in our earthly life will remain dark and without hope. But once God has pitched His tent among us, our faith assures us that Christ Jesus is now forever in our midst because He is Emmanuel: "God is with us." When the Word became flesh, it became possible for us to see reality from the perspective of the Risen Christ, which is what the Beloved Disciple did when he laid his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. As we dwell within Christ Jesus, it is now possible for each of us to be suffused with God's love and to be transformed by it. Let us now be immersed in God's love and share that love with the world!

At His Baptism, Jesus came to the full realization that He is the beloved Son of God. By virtue of our own Baptism, He makes us sons and daughters, together with Him, of God the Father. This is our true identity, which means my life is no

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longer about me alone but is about my life in union with God. God is the center of my being; He is my Ultimate Concern. It is not about my puny ego with all of its petty interests, plans, and agendas. This is the revelation of true love revealed in Jesus' Baptism. And, this revelation is a great time to celebrate God's

unbounded mercy for each and every one of us.

With the intercession of our Blessed Mother, may we follow her Son, Jesus, on the way of faith and charity, the path traced by our Baptism.



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to **proclaim** to
the world **your**
story of His love.



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