

One of the hardest questions to answer is, "Who am I?" Sometimes we say that at certain times in our life, we go through an identity crisis. We are not really sure who we are. In fact, many of us struggle with trying to find our identity throughout our whole life.

For example, if a teacher asks a student, "Tell me, who is Sam?" And Sam says, "Well, I like to play football. My favorite color is green. I want to be a doctor when I grow up. I have a girlfriend - she's really nice." And the teacher replies, "These things are good. But do they really define you? What's your deepest identity?"

These things do not get at Sam's deepest identity. Our deepest identity – the very core of our being – is that we are children of God. St. John says in our first reading, "*Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.*" We are God's children now. This is one of the most comforting verses in all of Scripture.

They are comforting because if we are God's children, then God is our Father. That is, not only did He create us, but He provides for us. There is no need to worry or fear. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us, "*But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?*"

The idea here is that God as a loving Father, who God provides for His children. Our deepest identity is being a child of God.

The way we become children, of course, is through baptism. For in baptism the Holy Spirit descends upon us just as He did upon Jesus as we heard in our Gospel today. And just as John testifies that Jesus is the Son of God after receiving the Spirit, so the Church testifies that we, too, are children of God who have received the Holy Spirit.

Whereas Jesus is the natural Son of God, we are adopted sons and daughters of God. While we do not yet fully understand what this means, we do know that one day, we shall be like Christ and see Him as He is.

Thus, as we wait patiently in hope, may we live as children of God by keeping ourselves pure as Christ is pure. In the famous words of Pope Leo the Great in his homily on Christmas day, "*Christian, remember your dignity...and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.*"