

Last week, the annual Consumer Electronics Show was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This event could perhaps be called an annual “*nerd-vana*” ... where all of the latest and greatest ... newest and highest technologies are showcased.

Forty-seven years ago, the first Consumer Electronic Show featured various technologies which don't seem so 'new' anymore. The precursor to the ubiquitous cell phone was demonstrated. This device was called a *Portable Executive Telephone*. It cost \$2,000 - which in today's money is about \$12,000. It weighed 19 pounds - which is heavier than a bowling ball by 3 pounds; and it required a license from the FCC in order to possess and operate it.

Three years later saw the debut of the Video Cassette Recorder.

Five years after that, the Atari Pong video game.

Six more years in the future saw the Compact Disc player.

Fifteen years on, the Digital Video Disk.

And on and on ... over all those years, a plethora of “high tech” alphabet soup devices that we now may look at as being old-school, or at least hardly high-tech anymore.

This year's Consumer Electronics Show featured what is called “wearable technology” - that is, computers on your wrist, in your socks, and even in your underwear; as well as an internet-connected toothbrush - that uploads data to a website to track your brushing and flossing online; 4G connected cars, as well as self-parking cars; personal drones - so you can have your own personal eye-in-the-sky; intelligent home appliances; and even bigger big-screen TVs.

Over the past two months, we have been celebrating particular liturgies that reflect Salvation History - the ways that God has been interacting with humanity for many millenia.

The four weeks of Advent represented the 4,000 years of human history as recorded in Sacred Scripture. We recounted the ways that God had reached out to our ancestors with Love ... seeking to maintain and develop a relationship with humanity through tradition and covenant.

Through the patriarchs and the prophets, God continued to break into the mundane aspects of human life — and as the prophet Isaiah foretold saying, “*See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*”

Christmas, of course, is a reflection on the Birth of Jesus Christ - when God became a human being in the form of a tiny and vulnerable infant. Over the ensuing weeks, we celebrated the family life of Christ, and commemorated His Mother and her role. And last week, we heard again, the story of the Magi, whose presence at the manger revealed early-on that Salvation was intended ... not for a select few ... but for the entire human race.

All of these “new things” changing humanity ... bit-by-bit ... drawing us all ... into a deeper relationship with God ... through His mercy and love ... by the gifts of grace and faith.

Today, we commemorate the Baptism of the Lord. Which when examined at first glance, may not seem to make much sense.

If, as the Catechism tells us, “[t]hrough Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as [children] of God,” and if through that, “we become members of Christ, [and] are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission” ... well, then, what’s Jesus doing getting down into the water?

The answer from the Gospel may sound cryptic - Jesus tells John the Baptist (who also objects to this idea) that it is “*it is fitting ... to fulfill all righteousness.*”

What this means is that Jesus seeks to identify Himself more deeply with all of humanity; as well as with every aspect of our fallen nature. His participation in Baptism - like all the events of His earthly life ... from the Annunciation and Incarnation; through His Birth, His Life, and ultimately in His Death and Resurrection - Christ desires to be identified with us ... so as to redeem every aspect of our human nature.

This idea is chanted at the Easter Vigil each year: “*O truly necessary sin ... O happy fault / that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!*”

Even sin cannot separate us from God’s Love in Jesus Christ.

The Baptism of the Lord represents the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. As the Prophet Isaiah foretold, “*he was pierced for our sins, / crushed for our iniquity. / He bore the punishment that makes us whole, / by his wounds we were healed.*”

In this first public act, Jesus assumes His role as our Redeemer. Taking on the mantle of our faults and sins ... in order to save us from them.

From the Servant Songs of Isaiah where God speaks through the Prophet saying, “*I am doing something new*” through the Book of Revelation where the Lord says, “*Behold, I make all things new.*” What God does to renew us in Christ ... while always ancient ... remains forever ... something new.

As we approach this Altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... Let us reflect on our own Baptism ... which united us with Christ in His death ... and as we commemorate today in an un-bloody way, His Sacrifice at Calvary upon this Altar ... may we be more united with Him ... so as to receive the Divine Life ... the grace ... the mercy ... and the love ... which God desires for us to receive ... today ... and every day ... as his beloved Children ... in Christ.