

Originally founded as *Blue Ribbon Sports* in 1964 in Beaverton, Oregon, *Nike, Inc.* assumed its present name in 1971. Its first big innovation was in 1974 with the *Nike Waffle Trainer* – which had a sole that looked like a waffle iron. Supposedly, *Nike* founder Bill Bowerman actually used a waffle iron to create the first prototypes as attested to by his wife Barbara, and Olympic runner and two-time gold medalist Otis Davis.

For those of you who are curious, Nike took its signature name from the Greek word Νίκη which means “Victory.”

Today is the Baptism of the Lord, and in the Gospel we hear John the Baptist’s testimony regarding Jesus’ baptism. In today’s reading from St. Mark, we have John’s testimony as well as the appearance of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus at His baptism, and the voice of God the Father from the heavens saying, “*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*”

Jesus’ baptism is the prototype of our baptism. Jesus didn’t need forgiveness from sin – because He was without sin ... and because He came to win for us forgiveness of our sins. Yet His baptism is more than an example for us to follow. Our baptism changes us. It re-configures us to be children of God. Jesus was already the Son of God, but His baptism re-configures water to become the Sacred Matter for Baptism as a Sacrament.

Saint John the Evangelist writing in his first Epistle, which we heard in the second reading, speaks of three witnesses to the victory of Christ which all of us receive. John speaks of the “*three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood.*” And while there are many ways to interpret these, one way is to see them as corresponding to the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

In Baptism, as we already heard, we become the children of God the Father. In the Eucharist, we receive Jesus Christ – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. And in the Sacrament of Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit, not only for ourselves, but also for service to the Christian

Community – the Church – as well as to those who need to hear the Good News ... out in the world.

Baptism re-configures us to be children of God. The Eucharist strengthens us in grace for our daily needs. And Confirmation sends us forth as heralds of the Gospel at the service of the world.

Our generosity in Christian service parallels God's generosity with us. The prophet Isaiah speaks of this when he says, "*[w]hy spend your money . . . for what fails to satisfy?*" Three times Isaiah repeats "*come[!]*" and the fourth time he says, "*Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life.*"

Heedfully, meaning "*with awareness*" ... so that we may receive the gift of God's life in this world, and eternal life in the next.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for an increased awareness of the presence of God's grace in our lives. May we recognize how this grace has transformed us into God's sons and daughters, nourishes us, and empowers us to go forth as missionaries and evangelists in our day-to-day activities.