

The people were filled with expectation and many were asking whether John might be the Christ...

The Greeks understood the vagaries of human nature.

Greek mythology is filled with tales of hubris being the undoing of high achievers.

Achilles had his heel.

And even children's nursery rhymes reveal human frailty when the human is raised up high:

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall!"

□ In modern literature, *Bonfire of the Vanities* traces one soul's ascendance to the heights and then his plunge into the depths.

(Donald Trump could be today's poster boy for hubris.)

John the Baptist was also a □ high achiever.

At his ascendance, he was better known and more influential than Jesus.

He was "Number One!" in the eyes of the people.

**SO: JESUS WAS BAPTIZED BY JOHN!**

We live in a competitive, consumer driven culture.

Being number one is our ultimate goal.

Yet John the Baptist stepped aside for Jesus.

..."one mightier than I than I is coming!" said John.

This is remarkable in any age.

During his baptism by John, Jesus went into the depths.

He is the "Jesus With Muddy Feet!"

Pope Francis is enjoining us to go deeper.

Go deeper and be with all the folks with dirty feet!

**This is to be a year of renewed mercy.**

**Mercy entails bending down, and lifting up again.**

**That is God's Mercy to us: bending down, and lifting up.**

**Mercy in some ways is a microcosm of our own baptism in which we go down into the deep water, only to be lifted up and out into new life,**

**For Jesus the opposite of hubris was allowing John to baptize him.**

**And for John stepping aside was the opposite of hubris.**

**So in today's feast we have both John and Jesus showing us the remedy for hubris.**

**And Mercy is our path: bending down and lifting up:**

**THE DOWN AND OUT ONES!**

**And so we pray:**

***Renew our baptisms O God.***

***Bend down and lift us up,***

*not to hubris,*

*but to mercy!*

*Lord have mercy.*

*Christ have mercy.*

*Lord have mercy!*

*Amen.*□