

The Baptism of the Lord January 9, 2022
Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: Is 42:1-4, 6-7

Thus says the LORD:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

R. (11b) The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Give to the LORD, you sons of God, give to the LORD glory and praise, Give to the LORD the glory due his name; adore the LORD in holy attire.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters, the LORD, over vast waters. The voice of the LORD is mighty; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

The God of glory thunders, and in his temple all say, "Glory!" The LORD is enthroned above the flood; the LORD is enthroned as king forever.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Second Reading: Acts 10:34-38

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth

with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

Alleluia Cf. Mk 9:7

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The heavens were opened and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, listen to him.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel: Lk 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

For all that we know from Scripture Jesus was reared by Mary and Joseph pretty much in obscurity. We can deduce this from the hometown skeptics' who voiced surprise when Jesus came healing, and teaching about the Kingdom; "Is not this the carpenter's son? ...Where did this man get all this?" These humble origins increase the complexity and wonder of the Incarnation. Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us, miraculously born, but fully one with us in our humanity. Like other babies he needed changing, he had to learn to walk, to feed himself, to talk and to do all those other things involved in growing up. We can only imagine that his life in most respects was quite normal progressing physically, mentally, and socially through the stages of growth like other children. Yet, on the day of his baptism the Holy Spirit and the Father endorsed him as Son. The Spirit in the form of a dove descended to rest on him, while the Father spoke from heaven, "You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased."

As yet, as far as we know, Jesus had not performed any miracles, had not taught any crowds, had not proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom, had told no parables, and had called and led no disciples. Yet, the Eternal God, God the Father, was not simply pleased with him, he was well pleased with him.

This incident tells us something both about the Father and the Son. The worth and value of Jesus the Son, was intrinsic, part of his essential nature. He was significant because of who he was, not only because of what he would do. In fact, what he later did was a result of who he was, not the other way around. This incident also indicates that the Father does not assign us worth based on our utilitarian value. We can not impress God, or make him love us more, or esteem us more valuable because we are useful to him. Contrariwise, we have value and significance because we are created in his image. In addition, through conversion and transformation we are being recreated into his divine image, "...through them [his power and promise] you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust and may become participants of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

Each baptism we observe should remind us of two things. First, we should recall the Lord's baptism, where he totally entered into our humanity, the Father and the Spirit esteemed him as the Son, well pleasing. Second, we should be reminded of our son-ship, that we too are the Father's child, esteemed as significant and well pleasing through faith in Jesus, and have been made "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

"The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world'... At his baptism 'the heavens were opened'— the heavens that Adam's sin had closed — and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation. ... The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and 'walk in newness of life.'"

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INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. What does this passage tell you about who Jesus is?
2. What does this passage tell you about what He came to do?

Second Reading

3. How do you see all of mankind included within the Good News, and not just Israel?

Gospel Reading

4. Why do you think that Jesus chose to be baptized?
5. What does this incident reveal about Jesus?
6. What do the baptism of water and the baptism by the Holy Spirit signify?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.