



Baptism of the Lord¹, Yr B

The First Sunday in Ordinary Time Yr B

Lectio Divina

Lectio: The reading from the Gospel of Mark for this feast is chosen to highlight that the gift of our baptism shapes our lives in an ordinary, i.e. everyday, way. Our text overlaps the gospel reading of 2nd Sunday of Advent Yr B which presented the first verses of Mark's Gospel (Mk 1:1-8). So refer back to the Lectio for that reading². So, the verses 9-11 of our text highlight the relevance for this Feast. These verses, in Mark's brief and concise manner, recount the Baptism of Jesus. Jesus' baptism in the waters of the Jordan River initiates our baptism in the water³ of the Sacrament of Baptism. John the Baptist had foreshadowed this 'new' baptism with the Holy Spirit in the cross-over verses Mk 1:7-8. Also, we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian aspect⁴ of our Baptisms is presented in Mark's few verses of Jesus' baptism: ①the Son is being baptized, ②the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and ③God the Father's voice of approval.

The text immediately following our text has Jesus being driven into the desert and tempted for forty days – this was his preparation for his time of active ministry.

Read: Mark 1: 7 - 11

Meditatio: How important to me is my baptism? How close do I feel to Jesus? Am I proud to serve Jesus, even in the simplest actions? What is the date and place of my Baptism? Do I appreciate the working of the Holy Spirit in my life through my baptism? How do I relate to God the Father? In what ways have I known 'God's favour' in my life? What lies ahead for me in this New Year? How strong will my faith be in the challenges following the Pandemic? How important will my baptism and the other Sacraments be for me in the New Year? Mark's Gospel presents again and again the way of the Cross; what crosses might I have to face this year? How am I living up to my Baptismal Promises?⁵

Oratio: Pray that we will always remember and continue to act on John the Baptist's call to repentance. Pray that we will draw on the power of the Lord with us through the continuing gift of our Baptism. Pray that we will be humble before the closeness to Jesus that we share in through our baptism. Pray that we will be open to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Pray that all people may be guided by the Holy Spirit. Pray that we will use the blessings of baptism to the glory of God. Pray for a trust in God the Father's care for us all. Pray that God's favour will bless our New Year. Pray for an understanding of the mystery of the Trinity. Pray that the gift of faith given in baptism may grow stronger and draw us closer into the life of our Triune God.

Contemplatio – Dwell in stillness, simply aware of the boundless expanse of mercy that surrounds you.

After your prayer – Find out about your Baptism and your Godparents.

✍ Fr Joe

Mark 1: 7 -11

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said, ‘Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens⁶ torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven⁶, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.’

Notes:

1 This Feast begins Ordinary Time week 1. 2021, being an odd numbered year, the weekday readings are from year I.

2 From Lectio Divina for 2nd Sun Advent Yr B: “Our text is the first verses of Mark’s Gospel i.e. the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is Mark’s ‘preamble’ which, typical of Mark’s Gospel, is brief and concise. Jesus comes from Nazareth to be baptized by John in the next verse. *The Jewish people versed in Scripture, had a very strong consciousness of sin and so, they were open to hearing John when he spoke of seeking God’s forgiveness. Actually, not everyone was ready to change.* In this context, referring to John the Baptist cues the readers to read on and discover the Good News of forgiveness. John the Baptist’s role was to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. However, to be ‘ready to change’ and recognize the Messiah and believe and follow him, we must begin with repentance; clearing our minds and lives to accept the new way of the Messiah. John proclaims: prepare the way through repentance! Jesus, the Messiah, will make possible a new way through the Holy Spirit. The challenge is to be changed so as to take up the new way of the Holy Spirit.”

3 The free gift of the waters of Baptism were prophesized in the Old Testament as recounted in the 1st Reading for this Feast: Isaiah 55:1-11.

4 This Trinitarian aspect is developed in the 2nd Reading for this Feast: 1st John 5:1-9.

5 Baptismal Promises: ①To reject all that is false, wrong, evil and ②to believe in God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Note: ‘believing in’ means more than ‘believing about’ but it means to shape/change your life ‘in accord with’ what you believe in. Or simply put the Baptismal Promises are: to repent and to believe.

6 Note that the Spirit descends from the ‘heavens’, the Father’s voice comes from ‘heaven’; while the Son is on the earth. Through Baptism, ①heaven and earth are united and ②God and mankind is united in Jesus.