



Beloved Son, Sent by the Spirit

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Is 42:1-4, 6-7)

Presentation of God's servant to the People

¹Here is my **servant*** whom I uphold,/ my chosen one with whom I am pleased./ Upon him I have put my spirit;/ he shall bring forth justice to the nations.^a / ²He will not cry out, nor shout,/ nor make his voice heard in the street./ ³A bruised reed* he will not break,/ and a dimly burning wick he will not quench./ He will faithfully bring forth justice./ ⁴He will not grow dim or be bruised/ until he establishes justice on the earth;/ the coastlands* will wait for his teaching./

God's address to his servant

⁶I, the LORD, have called you for justice,/ I have grasped you by the hand;/ I formed you, and set you/ as a covenant for the people,/ a **light** for the nations,^b / ⁷To open the eyes of the blind,/ to bring out prisoners from confinement,/ and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

THE FOCUS: **Servant**

COMMENTARY

- In vv.1-4, God presents his servant to the people in Exile.
- V.1 indicates the status of God's servant:

whom I uphold, my chosen one, with whom I am pleased, upon whom I put my spirit.

- God has a special relationship with his servant.
- V.1b indicates his servant's mission: He shall bring forth justice to the nations.
- V.2 indicates that his servant will work for justice quietly.
- V.3 indicates that his servant will not cut short anything that is about to end or decapitate, but will have the patience to let nature take its course.
- In v.4, the justice to be established by God's servant will be universal.
- In v.4, God's servant is also seen as a teacher.
- In v.6, God tenderly speaks about his servant's vocation.
- He will be victorious in his fight for justice.
- God has shown himself to be a kind father to his Servant/Son.
- "He holds him by the hand" evokes the tender guidance of the Father to his Son.
- "I formed you" may no longer refer to his being formed in his mother's womb, but to his education, formation as his servant grows up.
- V.6 also indicates the big mission of his servant: covenant of the people; a light to the nations: to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from the prison cell, to

FEAST OF THE LORD'S BAPTISM (C)

JANUARY 13, 2019

bring those in darkness out of dungeons.

REFLECTIONS

The Reading tells us much about God's servant and his destiny.

God's servant has a big mission to carry out: to establish justice upon earth.

- Peace is proclaimed through Jesus Christ.
- V.37 points to the events after the baptism of Jesus by John.
- V.38 points also to the event when God anoints Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power. This is the baptism of Jesus.
- V.38b indicates the mission of Jesus after his baptism: doing good, healing those oppressed by the devil (exorcism).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 29:1-2, 34, 3, 9-10)

THE LORD WILL BLESS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE.

SECOND READING (Acts 10:34-38)

^{34*} Then Peter proceeded to speak and said,*
“In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.
³⁵Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.

^{36*} ^k You know the word [that] he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all,* ³⁷what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, ^{38m}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.

THE FOCUS: The Anointed Jesus

COMMENTARY

- Peter, the apostle, preaches in the house of Cornelius, a Gentile. He explains why he is there. Peter affirms that God has no partiality. V.34. God does not discriminate against the Gentiles.
- God accepts all individuals who fear him and are righteous (V.35).
- V.36 recalls God's dealing with the Israelites through Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS

God loves everyone. He cares not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. God shows his love to all through the ministry of Jesus.

GOSPEL READING (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.”

THE FOCUS: Beloved

COMMENTARY

John's role is to pave the way for the one who will baptize with the Spirit. His expression not worthy to untie the sandal (Dt 25:9) shows his high respect for the family of Jesus as well.

Baptism of Holy Spirit and fire echoes the

purifying fire in Is 4:4 and Mal 3:3.

REFLECTIONS

Jesus' ministry is favored. The Holy Spirit descends upon him and his work is baptizing through the Holy Spirit and fire.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

From the Christian point of view, the First Reading speaks of Jesus as the servant, the chosen and the beloved one of God, who has a big mission on earth. The Gospel Reading describes how Jesus is baptized. He is declared as the beloved son of God. It is the beginning of his mission. In the Second Reading, Peter testifies to Jesus' baptism.

How to develop your homily / sharing

The baptism of our Lord is the theme of this Sunday's liturgy. His baptism is not that of repentance, but the beginning of his mission.

In his baptism, God identifies Jesus as his beloved Son. For us listeners, we must take Jesus seriously.

He is not an ordinary person and a religious leader. He is God-sent, anointed, comes from God and has a divine mission. Right after his baptism, Jesus preaches the kingdom of God.

He does this through his words and deeds. His words are his sayings, parables, teachings, etc. His deeds are his miracles, healings, casting out of demons, and forgiving, in his missionary journeys up to Mt. Calvary.

His awareness as the Son of God, beloved, chosen one, etc., makes him stand by his mission.

This feast is a good occasion for us Christians to reflect on our baptism. We are also

declared by God as his beloved ones, his sons and daughters. Our baptism purifies us from our sins and removes the original sin. Our baptism incorporates us into the family of God, in the Church, Christ's body. In baptism, we share in the mission of Christ.

Doing nothing to spread the good news is reneging our vocation as Christians. Having no drive nor the energy to do some mission and apostolate renders meaningless our identity as Christians, given in baptism.

There is no meaningful Christian life without a commitment.

Those who seek baptism for their children must also be serious in transmitting the Christian faith to them. The Christian parents must be the first teachers of their children on faith and morals, on human values like justice and peace, harmony, love of our planet earth, etc. They must also study their faith.

Alas, many of our churches spend more money for renovations, physical improvements of the church, than supporting the catechists and educating young people to the true faith in God. Many church leaders and pastors are also misguided regarding their priorities. Sharing in the mission of Christ by virtue of our baptism is not a picnic, but a total sacrifice to combat evil and advance the kingdom of God here on earth.

III. OUR CONTEXT

1. Many Christians are ignorant of their faith.
2. Many Christians are not committed to communicate their faith to their children.
3. Many Christians have turned sacred liturgies to mere entertainment and personal display of talents.
4. We need more missionaries who are focused on their evangelical work.

-Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM