

# Read

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3,  
9-10 (11b)

Acts of the Apostles  
10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

## LIVING THE WORD

### Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

January 12, 2020



#### REFLECTION

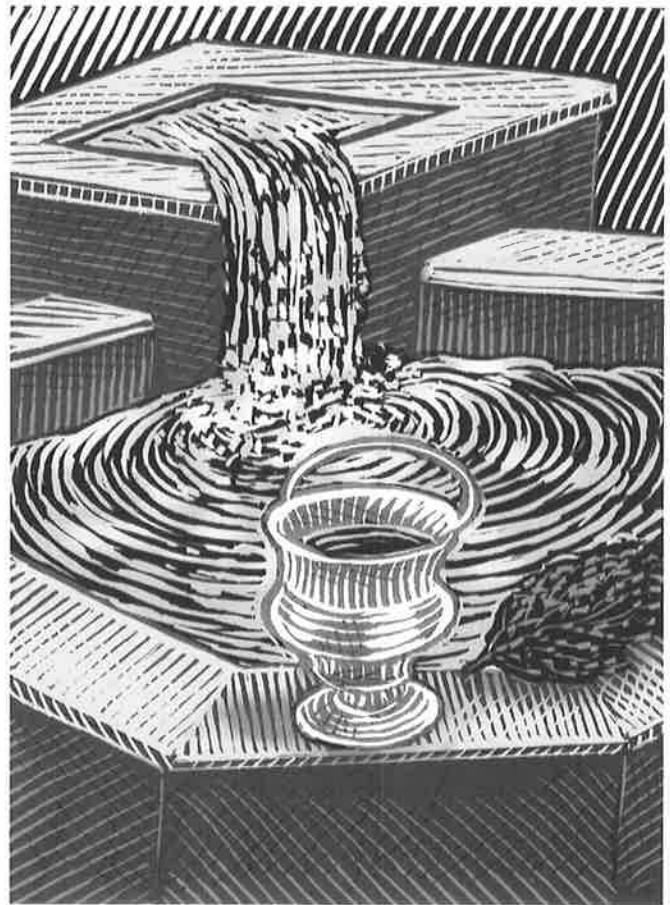
In the accounts of Jesus' baptism, the Spirit of God descends like a dove and a voice comes from the heavens and says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Here we have the entire essence of Christian community, rooted in the Trinity. We see the Father, Son, and Spirit together—equal—grounded in a genuine, relational love. This is what makes God, God. The love would not be the same without any of the individual players. We cannot experience the fullness of the love of the Father without the Son and Spirit. The same is true for any other combination of the three. This Trinitarian love needs to be the model par excellence of all our relationships. We mark ourselves with the Sign of the Cross, reminding us of our true identity. We are God's beloved sons and daughters. We belong to God.

Perhaps we do not always treat others as beloved and chosen by God because we cannot accept that reality ourselves. Henri Nouwen, a Catholic priest and theologian, wrote that if we dare to believe that we are beloved, we may suddenly realize that our lives are very, very special. We realize that we have the responsibility to help our brothers and sisters know that they are also beloved sons and daughters of God, and that we all belong together.



#### ACTION

Next time you enter church and sign yourself with holy water, think about your Baptism and your relationship with the Trinitarian God. While this is always the purpose when we sign ourselves, it can be easy to forget what we are actually doing. Break the routine and actually take a moment to remember what you are doing and in whose name you are signing yourself.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you daily live your baptismal call?
- ❖ What does it mean to be God's beloved?



January 12, 2020

## FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

### LECTIONARY #21A

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

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

Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Jesus humbly requested baptism, and began his active ministry. The Spirit of God confirms his identity, and Scripture marks Jesus as claimed by the Father. We too are part of God's family by virtue of Baptism. How do we function as part of the Body of Christ? How do we live out our lives as priest, prophet, and king?

**Q FOCUS:** *Becoming priest, prophet, and king we put on Christ at Baptism.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the last day of Christmas Time. The religious observance of Christmas takes place in a much different period than the secular observation. Note the number of days in the Christmas season, and examine the time remaining until Lent begins.

### Church Teaching Connection

Jesus' baptism is one point in Scripture where we see the power of the original sin falter in the goodness, purity, and wholeness of Christ, his identity, and his mission on earth. God's own voice falls upon the scene of the Son, humble in nature, requesting and receiving baptism from his cousin (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 536).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

### Gospel

Matthew 3:13-17

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

When we observe the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we remember Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. We remember that Jesus approached his cousin, John the Baptist, and requested that John baptize him. Previously in Scripture, we heard that when the Virgin Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth's unborn child jumped for joy in his mother's womb. When Jesus approached John this time, John's heart must have swelled with gladness at seeing Jesus. This time though, Jesus spoke to John and asked the baptizer to baptize him, just like he was baptizing the other repentant people. The people who were with John wondered if John was the Messiah, the promised one of God. It was John, however, who knew Jesus' identity, and the importance of this man. When John heard Jesus' request to be baptized, he humbled himself before his Lord, stating, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14).

We know that Jesus wasn't baptized with the words used by the Church, and we know that he had no need to be forgiven of any sin.

### ► So why a baptism?

Jesus' baptism is a new beginning for him—indeed, his public ministry and journey to the Cross begins at this point in Scripture. When Jesus arises from the water, the Spirit of God descended on Jesus "like a dove" (Matthew 3:16), and God's own voice claimed and identified Jesus.

### ► Why do you think Jesus was baptized?

### ► How is Jesus' baptism different from our own Baptism?

When a person is baptized, he or she has "put on Christ," as Galatians tell us (3:27). In this sacrament we too are identified by God and the Church, and our identity in Jesus Christ is known and

realized. In this sense, God also claims and identifies each of us at our Baptism. Some may wonder what this sacrament means if the Baptism wasn't the conscious choice of an adult. In our Catholic faith we initiate the youngest of children into the faith so that they might receive the grace of the sacrament while growing and maturing in relationship with God. Baptism for Catholics isn't a representation or personal commitment of an existing relationship with God; it is the reception of grace and our identity in Jesus Christ.

### ► What do we know about the identity God gives us at Baptism?

At our Baptism, we are incorporated into the Body of Christ.

### ► How do we behave as members of this Body, and how are we representing the Body of Christ to others?

### ► How do others experience the Body of Christ as a result of our actions, inaction, and the way we live our lives?

Each of us has the opportunity and call to participate in the world as the hands and feet of our Lord. Every hour of every day we are given this terrific responsibility. We exercise this opportunity in every school day, during lunch and passing periods, and in classes. Families—parents, siblings, grandparents, and all those we love are meant to be the Body of Christ together and to one another.

### ► How can you, as a baptized member of God's family, be Christ's hands and feet for your family and those in your school community?

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 114.*

**We are called to be part of the Body of Christ. What is one area of your life you believe needs to change?**

**What changes can you make to better be Christ's hands and feet in the world?**

# Act on the Word

## Our Identity in God

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church may be needed for this activity.*

Facilitate a group discussion about Baptism. Start the conversation by giving the students a definition of Baptism using the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1213–1216. Ask if any of the students know people who they admire for truly living out their baptismal identities. Discuss being a godparent, as some teens may be godparents already. Lastly, give a brief discussion about holy water, and how we use it in the renewal of baptismal promises. Invite the students to visit the baptismal font at the church, each blessing himself or herself with water on the way inside the church. Spend time together in solitary prayer before returning to the youth room.

## Living Out Baptism

*Art materials, poster board, and magazines are needed for this activity.*

Create a collage of pictures of people living out their baptismal identities. First, use poster board to cut out a large cross or other shape to represent Jesus. The teenagers can use magazines or create their own artwork of people serving God and one another as Jesus has called us to do. Include pictures of people in prayer, the feeding of the hungry, and the educating of children. If any group is at a loss for what to use, remind them of the works of mercy, and how these works are foundational Catholic action in the world, and have been since the dawn of the Church.

## Closing Prayer

*Close with the "Prayer of St. Theresa of Avila."*

*Let nothing disturb you.*

*Let nothing frighten you.*

*All things pass.*

*God does not change.*

*Patience achieves everything.*

*Whoever has God lacks nothing.*

*God alone suffices.*

*Christ has no body now on earth but yours;  
no hands but yours; no feet but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which the compassion  
of Christ must look out on the world.*

*Yours are the feet with which he is to go about  
doing good.*

*Yours are the hands with which he is to bless  
his people.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*