



BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Year A
January 12, 2020

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10
Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17

Assembly

(An unlit candle, a Bible opened to this week's gospel and a bottle of Holy Water rest on a cloth-covered table in the meeting place.)

Beginning Prayer

(The candle is lit. The leader blesses each member with the Holy Water After a short time of reflection, members alternate reading the following prayer aloud.)

All: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

I: 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.

All: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

II: 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.

All: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

I: 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.

All: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

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

LISTEN TO THE LORD

(After the gospel is read, the leader invites members to choose a few words from the gospel that touch them.)

The leader asks these two questions with a pause between them: “What does this gospel say to you?”, “How does this gospel affect you in your life?” The community silently reflects on these questions. The leader invites members to share their thoughts about the Insights and Reflection Questions for the week in a single group or within smaller groups.)

Insights

Some of the largest rivers in the world begin with just a trickle at their source which is referred to as the ‘headwaters’ of the river. A river may begin at a spring or from melted snow runoff from the top of a mountain. As it flows, gravity and the geology of the earth along its path help the river travel to the mouth of the river which is where it completes its journey to the ocean. Along its journey, many other rivers, creeks and streams may drain into it to build a much larger body of water than its humble beginning. As a river travels, it provides vital nutrients and nourishment to all of the living plants and animals that live near it.

Our journey with God is like a river. We begin our journey at the ‘head water’, a trickle of water that dribbles down our forehead in the Baptism ceremony we began our Christian life with. Along the way we may converge with other rivers, streams and creeks to merge our faith or make it larger and

stronger. Some faith milestones like confirmation and marriage contribute to keeping our river on course, other turbulent times may result in our river diverting course or tumbling over obstacles but eventually our river empties at the mouth of God's ocean where we merge into the vast body of God's love.

Jesus shows us the path to righteousness by stepping into the river to be baptized by John. His head water was the beginning for all of us. In that moment, Jesus achieved God's will. He identified with all of us he came to save and showed us how to humble ourselves before God.

In order to reach the mouth of our river our faith must not stagnate. Jesus shows us how to follow God's will and strive to please him so we too will hear God say that we are his children and he is well pleased with us.

Reflection Questions

- ◆ In what ways can one's personal 'spiritual river' provide nourishment to those it has touched?
- ◆ How has Jesus' humility before God inspired you?
- ◆ What are some of the qualities of a river that compare to your own religious journey?
- ◆ What nourishes your 'river of belief'?

Suggestions for Action

- ◆ Spend some time at a river or other body of water near you to contemplate Jesus' baptism and commencement of his ministry.
- ◆ Help protect our water and our health. Go to www.cleanwaterfund.org to find out how to get involved.
- ◆ Jesus' baptism marks the beginning of his ministry. In honor of this celebration, minister to someone you have never spoken to about Christ.

HEAR THE LORD

(After about fifteen minutes of sharing, the leader poses these questions: "How has the sharing from this session affected you?", "How will it change you this week?" The leader allows a moment for members to reflect before inviting them to share their thoughts. The leader reads a selection from the readings aloud. Following the reading, the leader poses these questions to

*the members: "What is Jesus saying to you?", "What is your response?"
The community pauses to reflect on these questions. A brief instrumental
selection may be played during this time. After a time of reflection, the
leader invites members to share what they hear Christ saying to them.)*

Closing Prayer

*(The leader plays the song "Let Your Living Water Flow" found at www.insightsbooks.com. Click on the Music link and select the appropriate week.
After the song is complete, the leader reads the following prayer aloud.)*

Head Waters

Leader: He was born of spirit
A carpenter's son
Studied the scriptures
He knew every one

As he grew older
He traveled the land
Curing the sick
With a healing hand

To those who would listen
He preached far and wide
A few were selected
To walk by his side

At the river of Jordan
He was baptized
The heavens were opened
God's pleasure realized

(Members exchange a sign of peace. The candle is extinguished.)