

READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

A READING FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH 42:1-4, 6-7

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights.
I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations.
He does not cry out or shout aloud, nor make his voice heard in the streets.
He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the wavering flame.
Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver, nor be crushed
until true justice is established on earth, for the islands are awaiting his law.
I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed you;
I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison,
and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

RESPONSORY ISAIAH 12:2-6

Truly, God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song; he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name.

You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

Sing a psalm to the Lord for he has done glorious deeds.
Make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES ACTS 10:34-38

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:

The truth I have now come to realise is that God does not have favourites,
but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right
is acceptable to him.

It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel,
and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ
- but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men.

You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea;

about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

John saw Jesus approaching and said:
This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 1:7-11

You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 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 baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’ It was this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. A voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.’

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.

REFLECTION

from Michael Fallon M.S.C.

John the Baptist’s contemporaries suffered political, military, religious and social burdens upon them. John called his suffering people to trust God and to prepare with a new heart and a new vision; God will lead them through ‘the one who is following’.

Mark’s Gospel was written for many non-Jewish people suffering hardship because of their Christian faith. Mark calls readers to identify their own sufferings with those of Jesus and therein to derive insight for their purpose and their response to their burdens.

Today, CoVid 19 is unleashing burdens; some were masked before CoVid appeared. Governments, communities and people are struggling for purpose and effective strategies in the ‘trackless wildernesses’ of health threats, grief, economic hardships, and stressed relationships. Our own sin still haunts us. We honour inspirational heroes throughout society and every Spirit-filled initiative to relieve suffering, and we thank God.

What difference for us does our own Baptism make? Mark wants us to be alert to the action of God’s Spirit in the life of Jesus revealing and drawing us into intimacy with his Father. Alert to and responding through the Spirit to the Father’s overwhelming, enduring love for us in our lives, we will learn our purpose and response in our circumstances.