



Reflection for Sunday, January 10, 2021

*Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 or 42:1-4, 6-7; Psalms 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10;
Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7 or Acts 10:34-38, Luke 3:15-16, 21-22*

Today is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The Gospel reading describes the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. All four Gospel writers saw this as a key event in Jesus' life. Since we know that Jesus was without sin, it seems strange that he would need to undergo the baptism of repentance that John offered. However, we must remember that, out of love for suffering humanity, God became man in all ways except for sin. Thus, He chose to undergo the experience of baptism to show His solidarity with us. Also, the baptism was the occasion of a physical manifestation of the presence of God. The dove, representing the Holy Spirit, descended upon Jesus. The voice from heaven, representing the Father, announced that Jesus was his beloved and pleasing son. This is one of the two places in Scripture in which all three persons of the Trinity are shown together (the other is at the Transfiguration). At Jesus' Baptism, the Trinity was manifested only at the end, while we were baptised in the name of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit during the rite itself. As a result, the Trinity lives in us. Are we conscious of God's presence within us day by day?

Isaiah's words in the first reading can be applied to John the Baptist, who was inspired to comfort the people by proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God. He was to prepare a way in the desert, which was the sinful world Jesus was born into. John preached repentance to prepare as many people as he could to accept Jesus and his message. John's words were not comforting, but his announcement of the coming of the Messiah brought hope to a people enslaved by a brutal foreign power.

In the second reading, St. Paul writes to Titus, a co-worker in Crete, of the hope of the return of the Lord in glory. Like John the Baptist to the people of Israel, Paul calls on Titus to live as God wills while he awaits the coming of the Lord. We know that we will meet the Lord at the end of our life on earth. When we do so, will we be proud of how we lived, or will we regret our failures? We can take comfort in the mercy of God while we strive to reform our lives to become more and more like Jesus.

- John Linge