

HOMILY FOR BAPTISM OF THE LORD

1. Comfort give comfort to my people says your God, speak tenderly proclaim that her service is at an end.
 - a. Powerful words of hope, our service is at an end, our guilt is expiated
 - b. service here means slavery and exile, it can also mean struggles, depression, fears, all the difficult aspects of being a human being
 - c. our service is the pain and result of sin, both original sin and our actual sins
 - d. promise of Isaiah is one that we still need to hear
 - e. Isaiah's promise is that a voice cries out in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord
 - f. every Valley shall be filled in, every mountain shall be made low
2. when John the Baptist is baptizing people asked him if he might be the Christ, the person who will fulfill the promise of Isaiah
 - a. John says I am merely baptizing you with water there is one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit
 - b. John is essentially saying I cannot save you, I come to announce the one who can
 - c. he will save you with the power of the Holy Spirit
 - d. difficult statement to understand, but the Holy Spirit obviously is God
 - e. so John is saying that the one who is coming will be operating with the power of God
3. in Luke's gospel Jesus has been baptized along with the rest of the people
 - a. Jesus seems to be identifying himself with the crowds
 - b. suddenly something different happens
 - c. the heavens are opened, Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove, and a voice comes from heaven saying "you are my beloved son with you I am well pleased"
4. Note God says to Jesus that he is well pleased him before Jesus has actually done anything
 - a. God is pleased with Jesus to simply for who he is
 - b. context of the gospel is interesting, the next part of the gospel is a genealogy of Jesus in which Luke traces Jesus all the way back to Adam
 - c. this is a way of saying that Jesus is standing in for the whole human race
 - i. everything he does will be as our representative, not simply an elected representative, he actually symbolizes us in himself
 - d. the rest of the gospel until the passion, will be Jesus inviting us to become part of Jesus people
 - e. the work of Jesus, healing and announcing the opportunity of salvation, is the ultimate obedience of Jesus to the father
5. Jesus is God's invitation to us
 - a. he is God appearing to us, inviting us to find comfort in him
 - b. St. Paul emphasizes that this is a free invitation, we could not do enough good deeds to deserve God's coming among us
 - c. rather as Isaiah has said he wishes to comfort us
 - d. St. Paul says out of his mercy he wishes to justify us and to give us the hope of eternal life
6. in our baptism God said the same thing to us he did to Jesus: "you are my beloved child in whom I am well pleased"
 - a. in our baptism and completed in confirmation God is also giving us the Holy Spirit
 - b. we do not see the Holy Spirit as a dove, but we do see him in the action of the Bishop anointing us with chrism oil
 - c. through baptism and confirmation completed in Eucharist, God has welcomed us into his family
 - d. we now belong to God, the only thing that can separate us from God is our refusal to accept him as our God
 - e. question of faith for us is accepting and believing that we are God's chosen people

7. Many experiences: temptations, human weakness, desire for immediate pleasure, Satan himself insinuate to us that we are not saved.
 - a. These deceitful voices tell us we will not find happiness with God, we need to look elsewhere
 - b. ultimately that is the choice that we struggle with each day of our life, each moment of our life,
 - c. do we believe that God has chosen us as his children or do we try to find some other way of happiness
 - d. We are often fooled, we turn away from God
 - i. Sin is when we choose to turn away from God and His laws
 - ii. May be disobeying Ten Commandments, might be deciding we are too busy to pray, may be more exciting to destroy reputation of another rather than praise them
 - iii. Many ways of putting God second in our life
 - e. Jesus has given the sacraments as His way of continuing to announce God's love for us
 - i. We are His children, He will never give up on us
 - ii. He is always sending His Spirit upon us, waiting for us to hear His voice
 - iii. You are my beloved son or daughter in whom I am well pleased
 - iv. He is pleased with us for who we are, not because we have any special skills to deserve His love.