

## BAPTISM OF THE LORD HOMILY

1. Imagine the scene of John baptizing
  - a. Image of O Brother where art thou
  - b. Scene if many people heading toward a river where there is a man baptizing
  - c. John is at Jordan, baptizing saying now is time to repent
  - d. Repent means to change direction, change direction of their lives
  - e. Powerful preacher, even Pharisees and Sadducees came out to see what the heck is going on
  - f. From other gospel stories, he even gave advice to Roman soldiers on how to change their lives
  - g. There are crowds of people coming to John wanting to be ready for the promised Messiah
  - h. As John is baptizing, suddenly Jesus shows up
  - i. John recognizes that Jesus is not someone needing to repent, He says I should be baptized by you
  - j. Jesus says let us go forward to fulfill all righteousness
  - k. This is a reference the prophecy of Isaiah which is in the first reading today
  - l. Jesus wants us to understand the meaning of His actions being in the light of the first reading
2. This reading from Isaiah expands our understanding of Jesus' baptism in the gospel
  - a. After Jesus is baptized some major visions happen to Jesus
  - b. The heavens are opened up for Him, He sees the Spirit of God descend as dove and a voice from heaven says this is my Beloved Son with whom I am well pleased
3. Isaiah speaks about the chosen one
  - a. Here is my servant whom I have chosen with whom I am well pleased, upon whom I have placed my spirit
  - b. Jesus is clearly fulfilling the promise of Isaiah
  - c. Isaiah goes on to describe the work for the this chosen servant with whom God is well pleased
  - d. Servant brings justice to nations: neither by dramatic crying out nor by violence.
    - i. A bruised reed he shall not break nor a smoldering wick will he quench
    - ii. He will open the eyes of the blind, bring freedom to the prisoners and light to those confined to darkness
  - e. Difference between Isaiah and Gospel is Jesus not merely a chosen servant
    - i. God says this is my Beloved Son with whom I am well pleased
4. With this feast we are once again introduced to this Jesus who as Peter says was anointed with the Spirit so that He might go about doing good and healing those oppressed by the devil
  - a. A lot of things seem to be happening with the baptism of Jesus
    - i. In His humanity He seems to be discovering the special relationship He has with the Father

- ii. He hears God announcing to Him that He is the Beloved Son of the Father
    - iii. God has anointed Him with the Holy Spirit to go out to the world and proclaim freedom and life
    - iv. We no longer are bound to the devil or even to the world
    - v. By following Jesus we are invited into a new world
  - b. By His baptism Jesus has changed the very meaning of Baptism
    - i. For John and his followers, it was an expression of repentance, a desire to renew one's life by changing the direction of one's habits
    - ii. Because of the ministry of Jesus begun in His Baptism, we have been changed by our own baptism
    - iii. God through the action of the Church and her minister declared us to be a child of God by baptism
    - iv. We are not just merely pledging to change our lives, God has entered into us
    - v. He is declaring us to have been chosen by Him to carry out the work of His servant
5. We have been chosen to open the eyes of the blind, to bring freedom to the oppressed, to bring healing
- a. Might question, how can I do these powerful things
  - b. For most of you it is simply by being faithful to your vocations in this life
  - c. In your daily jobs you may be called to bring new insight to people, to provide in some way for the needs of God's people
  - d. Perhaps more importantly, in your families, you are sent to do the work that Jesus is sent to do
  - e. You are to proclaim that good news that God loves his people
  - f. By your lives you proclaim that God wants to bring light into the darkness, freedom and healing to the oppressed
  - g. Whether with children, brothers and sisters or parents, each of us is a witness to the love of God
  - h. To the degree that we have accepted the gift of having been chosen by God
  - i. The more effective we can be in proclaiming His word
  - j. Proclaim the word of God our commitment to God
  - k. By not being ashamed of our faith, by being open to discovering what God may be asking of us
  - l. We show our openness by prayer, by studying the bible by seeking to learn more about God's presence in our Church.
6. In His baptism Jesus heard God proclaim Him as His beloved Son with whom He is well pleased
- a. Similarly, in our own baptism God declared each of us to be His beloved son or daughter with whom He is well pleased