

Gospel Reflection

Water is a rich and potent symbol. We all know that no life on earth would be possible without it. We use it for our sustenance, our cleansing, our relaxation; it touches nearly every facet of human life, and its absence is soon noted. Without it, the grain, wine, milk, and other “rich fare” from Isaiah would not be possible. The messianic age is characterized as a time of abundance and fertility, not attainable without water. It was a precious commodity in Jesus’ world. Water has its dark, dangerous side as well—the chaos of the dawn of creation was symbolized by water, the earth was destroyed (and still knows destruction) by the waters of the flood. Israel risked it all in the waters of the Red Sea as they fled Egypt and entered the desert. In similar fashion, today Jesus risks it all in his calling as Son of God and, like the Israel whose son he also was, he will enter the desert in the next few verses of Mark’s Gospel.

Another powerful life symbol is blood. Like water, it is essential. John’s letter today tells us that three things testify to Jesus as the Son of God: water, blood, and the Spirit. Today’s feast forms a hinge of sorts between the two great “water and blood” moments in the life of Jesus. It is the culmination of the season of the Nativity, the time when we remember and celebrate that Jesus came into the world as a fully human being, in water and blood. It is also the day on which he begins his public ministry of calling Israel to repentance by proclaiming the reign of God, a ministry that will ultimately end in water and blood as he is crucified. But hovering over all of this is the Holy Spirit. It is by the Spirit that Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary; it is the Spirit who guides his entire ministry from Jordan to Calvary; and it will be the Spirit who brings his resurrected life back to the world, who continues it to this very day in the waters of baptism and the blood of disciples, by which his Body, the Church, is still proclaiming the reign of God to the world.

KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Mark 1:7-11

H S H D E D Y X I V P Y T
 B E L O V E D S O N O I N
 W Y V M I S L I F Z R H A
 L A U O E A C W Z I M Y Z
 N J T V D E M C P O H K A
 A E M E B L L S X T Y B R
 D S K A R P Y I R H A E E
 R U W L T L C O L P R R T
 O S J K O L W N T A B N H
 J A M H B E H I X K G P Y
 N H O J G W S L A D N A S
 S A A P L M H E A V E N T
 G Q L U E V Z Y R S L P W

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

BAPTISM	BELOVED SON	DOVE
GALILEE	HEAVEN	HOLY SPIRIT
JESUS	JOHN	JORDAN
NAZARETH	SANDALS	VOICE
WATER	WELL PLEASD	WORTHY

Disciple’s Reflection & Questions of the Week

*The Baptism of the Lord
1/11/2009*

*Mark 1:7-11
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
www.olaclaremont.org

Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

The Word of God: *Mark 1:7-11*

The Gospel according to Mark

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to

stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was **baptized in the Jordan** by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and **the Spirit, like a dove,**

descended upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord



Gospel Glossary

Baptized in the Jordan: Jesus participates in John's baptism of repentance as a symbolic beginning to his broader mission

The Spirit: Jesus' anointment by the Spirit establishes him as the Christ (or "anointed one")

Like a dove: Just as a dove carrying an olive branch signaled God's delivery of Noah and his family from the flood, so too does the dove in this passage symbolize the delivery of the world from sin through Christ's redemptive mission

Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- How have I grown in my understanding of my baptism?
- What significance does Jesus' being called "beloved son" have for me?
- What is the greatest challenge of my baptism?
- What is the greatest blessing of my baptism?

Closing Prayer

Almighty, eternal God,
When the Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan, you revealed him as your own beloved Son. Keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful to your calling.

We ask this through the Lord Jesus Christ your son.

Amen.

The Baptism of the Lord