

INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS

THE FIRST READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Thus says the LORD:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

‘I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.’

The word of the Lord

THE RESPONSE TO THE PSALM IS

The LORD will bless his people with peace.

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly powers,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;
bow down before the LORD, majestic in holiness.

The LORD will bless his people with peace.

The voice of the LORD upon the waters,
the LORD on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the LORD full of power;
the voice of the LORD full of splendour.

The LORD will bless his people with peace.

The God of glory thunders;
in his temple they all cry, 'Glory!'
The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits as king for ever.

The LORD will bless his people with peace.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE ACTS OF THE
APOSTLES

In those days: Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all — you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.’

The word of the Lord

Alleluia, alleluia.

The heavens were opened and the voice of the Father thundered:

‘This is my beloved Son; listen to him’.

Alleluia

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

At that time: Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptised by him.

John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.'

Then he consented.

And when Jesus was baptised, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him,

and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD

THE REFLECTION

I find it frustrating when a sentence begins “Father you should” and does not go on with “and I will help by”. It is something so unhelpful to dump a problem and walk away. Get your hands dirty is a lovely phrase meaning take a risk and do something, it may take time, patience and listening, something men are not supposed to be good at.

ACTUALLY WE ARE!

This would have been a brave story to include about Jesus. Why did Jesus, the son of God, without sin, want to be baptised by John who was calling for sinners to come to a change of heart. The traditional answer was to set a precedent; all should be baptised. Perhaps a deeper answer gives us a fuller understanding of the Son of man becoming one like us, standing in a queue with sinners in search of a change of heart, Jesus shows his solidarity with those who need God in their lives. He is going to show them how by the events of his life and by his teaching.

The answer given to him is the descent of the Holy Spirit and the awareness of being the Son of God the Father declares to him. Jesus stays with us to help, showing his power and teaching us the way to the eternal life. The Son of God gives his time to us in his time; a world of frequent poverty, hunger, exclusion of lepers and many other faults. His treatment of people shows a different way, he talks clearly with good examples, he heals the afflicted, to enable them take a full life in the community and he stands up to the pharisees with their unrealistic demand for a holy practice and against the racket in the temple of money changing and selling animals for pointless sacrifices, challenging and taking a risk that he would lead to his execution.

I think the most important part of a baptism is the parents’ willingness to give the gift of their faith to their children. In word and action, they pass on the belief and values they hold in high estimation. Families help each other, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and friends provide interest and joy as a meeting of minds over the shared interest of children.