

The Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
(or Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11)
Ps 29:1-4, 9-11
(Ps 104:1-4, 24-25, 27-30)
Acts 10:34-38
(or Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Monday January 10

1 Samuel 1:1-8
Ps 116:12-19
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday January 11

1 Samuel 1:9-20
1 Sm 2:1, 4-8
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday January 12

1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Ps 40:2 and 5, 7-10
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday January 13

1 Samuel 4:1-11
Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25
Mark 1:40-45

Friday January 14

1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22a
Ps 89:16-19
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday January 15

1 Samuel 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1
Ps 21:2-7
Mark 2:13-17

Today's readings are full of expectation. What are *you* waiting for? How do you need God to come and rescue you from injustices, or deliver you from evil, or comfort you as you wait for loved ones to turn their hearts back to God? What guidance have you been seeking while feeling confused and uncertain?

Do you feel Christ's gift of peace within you as you wait expectantly? Or do you feel impatient?

In the Gospel, we see John the Baptizer's congregation filled with expectancy because they hoped that he was their finally-arrived Messiah. Yearning for God to intervene against injustices, foreign oppression, and sin, they latched onto the fiery enthusiasm of John and his baptism of repentance.

God, however, had something much better in mind, more complete. The real

Messiah would baptize with the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit. Whereas John could only call people to repentance, the real Messiah would empower them to grow in holiness by giving them his own Spirit of holiness.

When Jesus submitted himself to John's baptism, it was not because he needed to repent; he was sinless. He was uniting himself to *our* need for repentance, thus starting his ministry of delivering us from evil and eventually take our sins to the cross.



In baptism, we are immersed into the holiness of Jesus as well as his ministry, his priesthood, his prophetic sharing of the Good News, his servant leadership, and yes, his sufferings for the benefit of others. The Holy Spirit empowers us to do as Jesus did, and the Father says, "You are my beloved child; with you I am well pleased!"

What do you expect? What do you think should happen in your daily life because of your baptism? Expectation is a good attitude -- unless it's based on impatience, which usually leads to disappointment. Expectation that's based on the goodness of God and what *he* wants for us is the attitude that brings us joy, greater faith, and even miracles.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What would you like to expect from God this year?
2. Is this something that he wants for you?
3. How might things turn out differently – but better – than what you imagine should happen?
4. Name some of the baptismal promises that God makes in his covenant with us. How do you know he keeps his promises?
5. Share the story of a time when an answer to prayer turned out better than you expected.