

## WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

**Readings:** Isaiah 42: 1- 4, 6-7  
Psalm 29: 1-4, 9-10  
Acts 10: 34-38  
Luke 3: 15-16, 21-22

Baptism of the Lord  
January 10, 2010

**Word:** God's love is glorified in the sonship of Jesus.

**Theme:** The sonship of Jesus is manifested upon those who fear the Lord and act uprightly. [Fear of the Lord]

**Promise:** *"Here is my servant whom I uphold...he shall bring forth justice to the nations"*. (Isaiah 42:1)

### Reflection:

Throughout the ages, we have celebrated Christmas as a season, with the twelve days between Christmas and the Epiphany as one long holy "day." Actually, the season ends today as we celebrate the Lord's baptism and marks the close of the liturgical season of Christmas, and signals the start of the first period of ordinary time.

But what is this moment, all about - Jesus being baptized by John in the River Jordan? By the banks of the river we see Him standing in line, awaiting his turn, along with the crowds of sinners turning to God through the pathway of repentance. The water of the River Jordan that day was filled with all kinds of sin, all kinds of people who came to repent. And there, the sinless One humbly submits Himself to this rite. The Lord was setting an example of humility for us to follow.

It was at the time of His baptism by John that Jesus received the call from God to begin His ministry of salvation, declaring Him as His Son, prophet and king of His people. Jesus' public ministry begins with the act of compassion and solidarity with humankind. He starts His life as a traveling preacher by identifying with us, taking upon His shoulders the tremendous burden and responsibility for our sins. The occasion is symbolic of what His work on earth is all about.

God the Father attests to the divinity of the Son at the moment of His baptism and, by this means, Jesus *"manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him."* (Jn 2:11). It was such an important moment, the Spirit of God took possession of Him in a very special way and the heavens rang out with approval. *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am pleased"*, Lk 3:22. In Isaiah 42:1 and Acts 10: 38, we are told: *"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, that he might be revealed to Israel"* as its Messiah.

The baptism of the Lord is a great feast; here the Holy Trinity is manifested for the first time. The Father speaks from heaven, the Son is present, and the Holy Spirit descends. Today's feast reminds us of our own baptism and presents us with an

opportunity to reflect on the implications of leading the life of a Christian. It's a time of special importance because it marks our spiritual birth - the beginning of the Lord reaching down, touching our lives, claiming us for His own and adopting us as His children. Because we were still infants, our parents and godparents spoke on our behalf when they introduced us into God's family, but as adults we have to ratify and act out, and personalize that religious decision. Through baptism we are freed from the debt of original sin which we inherited from our first parents, thus restoring and reconciling us with God who loves us.

Our baptism is as awe-inspiring phenomenon, as was Jesus'. Through baptism we become branches of Jesus who is the vine. Through baptism we achieve death to original sin and life in God. Through baptism we become members of the body of Christ, the People of God. Through baptism we are adopted as children of God, with the Spirit dwelling within us. Through baptism we are incorporated into the death and resurrection of Christ.

In the Church precisely through the baptism we are called to holiness, each one in his own state of life and condition, and to exercise our apostolate. As members of the Church we are intimately connected through the sacramental character of baptism, which imprints sure and indelible spiritual sign on our souls. It is like Christ's seal of possession on the soul of the baptized, for Christ takes possession of our souls at the moment of baptism. This is the reason the Church desires that children should receive these gifts of God early.

To strengthen our mission through baptism, Jesus Christ presents Himself to us most perfectly and fully in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, for He truly speaks to us when the Scriptures are proclaimed in the assembly, and during Communion at Mass we truly receive Him in His fullness - body, blood, soul and divinity. By this God-given means, the grace received during our baptism grows ever stronger, becoming for us, "a fountain within us, welling up to eternal life."

By our own baptism, heaven opened for us, the Holy Spirit descended upon us, and we were commissioned to do God's work. Thus, the mission to be the representatives of Christ in this world remains with us throughout our lifetime. We must be open to the Holy Spirit and remain faithful to our calling. Being faithful to our mission call is to be righteous before the Lord. If we honor and love God, He will remain in us and allow the fruits of His Spirit to manifest in our lives.

Prayer:

Almighty God, thank you for this totally undeserved gift. We rejoice in the countless good things you have lavished upon us. Keep us in your love and help us to keep the promises made on our name at baptism. May you be pleased with us on account of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:**

1. Do we go about our daily tasks conscious that we are the Father's beloved children who must endeavor to please him, as Jesus pleased him?
2. Are we reminded of our own baptism as God's call to follow in the footsteps of His Son, Jesus?

**Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:**

January 11, 2010 (Mon):	1 Sm 1:1-8; Ps 116:12-19; Mk 1:14-20
January 12, 2010 (Tue):	1 Sm 1:9-20; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8; Mk 1:21-28
January 13, 2010 (Wed):	1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20; Ps 40:2, 5, 7-10; Mk 1:29-39
January 14, 2010 (Thur):	1 Sm 4:1-11; Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 25-26; Mk 1:40-45
January 15, 2010 (Fri):	1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22; Ps 89:16-19; Mk 2:1-12
January 16, 2010 (Sat):	1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19, 10:1; Ps 21:2-7; Mk 2:13-17

***"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"***