

John the Baptist and the Lamb of God (2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6—A Light to the Nations

1. Prophecies of the “Servant” of the LORD
2. Mission of the “Servant”
 - a. Salvation of Israel: To “raise up” the “tribes” of Israel
 - b. Salvation of the Gentiles: To be a “light to the nations”

Psalm 40—Here I am Lord, I Come to Do Your Will

1. God does not desire “holocausts” and “sin offerings” (vv. 6-7)
2. The true sacrifice: “obedience” and “doing God’s will” (vv. 8)

1 Corinthians 1:1-3—3 Year Cycle of Paul Readings Begins

1. Three Year Cycle of Pauline Readings: Year A, Year B, Year C
2. Semi-Continual Reading: Begins with 1 Corinthians
3. Sundays in Ordinary Time: Independent Track from the 3 Year Gospel Cycle

John 1:29-34—John the Baptist and Jesus

1. Why are we reading from *the Gospel of John* in Year A?
 - a. 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time: always begins with Gospel of John
(Year A and B: testimony of John to Jesus; Year C: Wedding at Cana)
 - b. Jesus’ public ministry: begins with the transition from John to Jesus
2. The Lamb of God, who takes away the Sin of the World
 - a. Prefiguration: the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12)
 - b. Prophecy: Suffering Servant, “like a lamb led to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53)
3. The Divinity of Jesus:
 - a. John declares that Jesus “was before me”
 - b. But John the Baptist is six months *older* than Jesus (cf. Luke 1)
4. The Baptism of Jesus:
 - a. “He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit”
 - b. “The Son of God”

The Living Tradition

1. How can John say he did not “know” Jesus when they were cousins? (John 1:31)
2. John Chrysostom: John grew up in the “desert”; not with family (Luke 1:80)
3. Hence, he did not grow up “knowing” Jesus as family or friend (cf. DSS)
4. Cyril of Jerusalem: John did not know Jesus by sight, but by divine *revelation*
5. That way, no one would doubt the revelation was from heaven

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

1. Jesus’ Public Life: “begins” with his baptism by John in the Jordan (CCC 535)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (2nd Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. If Year A is supposed to be focused on the Gospel of Matthew, why does Ordinary Time begin with a passage from the Gospel of John about John the Baptist?

2. What is the Old Testament background of John the Baptist’s declaration that Jesus is the “Lamb of God” who takes away the “Sin of the world”? Go back and read Isaiah 53 in its entirety and list the connections with the life and mission of Jesus.

3. In the Communion Rite, the priest lifts up the Eucharist and takes the words of John the Baptist on his own lips: “Behold him who takes away the sin of the world; blessed are those who are called to the Supper of the Lamb.” How is the priest like John the Baptist at this moment?

For Further Study

1. The Mystery of Jesus’ Baptism (CCC 535-537).
2. John the Baptist (CCC 717-720)
3. Fulton Sheen, *The Life of Christ* (chapter 4, pp. 79-84)