

**The Baptism of the Lord
(Year C)**

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7—The Servant of the Lord

1. Identity of the Servant (42:1-3)
 - a. Servant: “Behold, my servant, whom I uphold”
 - b. Beloved: “My chosen, in whom my soul delights”
 - c. Spirit: “I have put my spirit upon him”
 - d. Gentleness: “bruised reed” and “smoldering wick”
2. Mission of the Servant: (42:4, 6-7)
 - a. Gentiles: brings “justice” to the “nations”
 - b. New Torah: the “coastlands” wait for his “law” (Hebrew *torah*)
 - c. New Covenant: he is given as “a covenant” to the peoples
 - d. Miracles: open the “eyes” of blind
 - e. Savior: release “prisoners” from “darkness”

Psalms 29—The Voice of the Lord

1. Voice of the LORD (Hebrew *qōl*): upon “the waters” (cf. Gen 1)
2. Throne of the LORD: “over the flood” (cf. Gen 1)

Acts 10:34-38—Peter Preaches about the Baptism of Jesus

1. Jesus’ ‘Christening’: “God *anointed* (Gk *chrīō*) Jesus with the Holy Spirit” (10:38)

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22—The Baptism of Jesus

1. John the Baptist: people questioned whether he were “the Christ” (Gk *christos*) (3:15)
2. The Coming One (3:16)
 - a. Strength: is “mightier than I”
 - b. Glory: “Whose sandals I am not worthy to untie”
 - c. Baptism: with “the Holy Spirit” and “with fire” (Gk *baptizō*)
3. Baptism of Jesus: “had been baptized *and was praying...*” (3:21)
 - b. Holy Spirit: “descended... in bodily form” (*sōmatikō eidei*) (3:22)
 - c. The Father: “a voice came from heaven”
 - d. Beloved Son: “with thee I am well pleased”

The Living Tradition: the Descent of the Holy Spirit

Thomas Aquinas: As Augustine says (*De Trin.* ii.), the Holy Ghost is said to have descended on Christ in a bodily shape, as a dove, not... by reason of His being *united* to the dove: but... because the dove itself signified the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as it *descended* when it came upon Him... As Chrysostom says (*Hom.* xii. *in Matth.*): *At the beginning of all spiritual transactions sensible visions appear, for the sake of them who cannot conceive at all an incorporeal nature; ... so that, though afterwards no such thing occur, they may shape their faith according to that which has occurred once for all.* And

therefore the Holy Ghost descended visibly, under a bodily shape, on Christ at His baptism, in order that we may believe Him to descend invisibly on all those who are baptized. (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, Q. 39, Art. 6)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Baptism of the Lord, Year C)

1. Who is the mysterious Servant in the book of Isaiah? What characteristics and qualities of his match up with those of Jesus?

2. Why does the Church choose Psalm 29 about the “voice” of the LORD for this feast day? How is it related to Jesus’ baptism?

3. What does it mean when Luke says the Holy Spirit descended in the “bodily form of a dove” (Luke 3:22)? How was this interpreted in the Living Tradition?

For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 78-89.