


Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

The Baptism of Jesus

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.



“the Spirit of
God descending
like a dove”

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

¹³Then Jesus appeared: he came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. ¹⁴John tried to dissuade him. “It is I who needs baptism from you”, he said, “and yet you come to me!” ¹⁵but Jesus replied, “Leave it like this for

You are invited to read the
Gospel passage attentively,
respectfully and reverently
as a gift of God.



the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.” At this, John gave in to him.

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. ¹⁷And a voice spoke from heaven, “This is my Son, the beloved, my favour rests on him.”



“beloved”

Reading

This feast marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the church's Ordinary Time. The account of the baptism of Jesus is found in all four Gospels and reflects the importance this event had for the early Christian communities.

In the first part of the Gospel vs 13-15, so determined is Jesus to express his solidarity with human beings in their human weakness and limitation, he humbly joins the queue for the baptism of repentance, although he is without sin himself.

In vs 16-17, as Jesus comes up out of the water of baptism he has a profound experience of the Father's unconditional love, which confirms his identity and prepares him for the mission ahead.

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say "I recognise this passage."

vl3. "Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John."

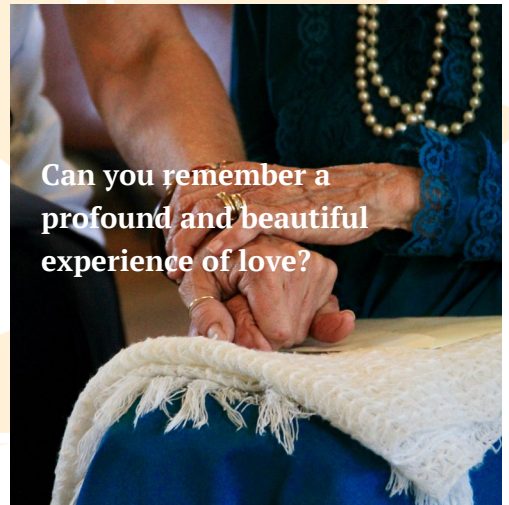
Can you enter into the experience of Jesus by remembering a time when you joined a new movement, espoused a new cause or embarked on a new direction in your life?

vl5. "leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands."

Can you enter into the experience of Jesus by remembering a time when you freely and humbly chose to identify with others in their need of mercy as an expression of solidarity and fraternity?

vl6. "the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him."

Can you remember a profound and beautiful experience of love and how it has marked an important turning point in your life?



vl7. "You are my beloved Son; my favour rests on you."

Can you identify the 'voices' in your life that have called you 'beloved' – God, in prayer, or that of parents, grandparents, friends - voices that have affirmed you and encouraged you and brought out the best in you?

Knowing oneself as beloved is the greatest security in human life.



work of blessing our brothers and sisters by our words and by our love so that they too might come to know that they are your beloved sons and daughters.



Can you identify the 'voices' in your life that have called you beloved?

Responding

Having recognised God's presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

Heavenly Father, thank you for the times when we set out on a new venture in our lives and we did so with the blessing of others who reminded us that "You are my beloved Son/daughter; my favour rests on you."

Heavenly Father, we ask forgiveness for the times when we were slow "to do all that righteousness required" by humbly identifying with people in their need and missed the opportunity to grow in solidarity with them.

Heavenly Father, help us to share in your

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God's presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. "**Beloved**".

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with the passage, what

new insight or understanding has been given to you into the meaning of true humility, or identity or love. It might read something like this: **Knowing oneself as beloved is the greatest security in human life.** This is only a sample. Try to uncover and express your own personal insight.



Reading

Jesus presents himself for Baptism in the River Jordan. John the Baptist reminds Jesus that he has no need of Baptism but Jesus desires to humbly identify with the others who do need it. In Baptism, Jesus experiences God, the Father's great love for him and is encouraged to live with the confidence that comes from this love alone.

Recognising

Can you remember a time when you made an extra special effort to be with people who were excluded from your group of friends or who felt left out even if it meant you had to suffer?

Can you remember a person, a parent, grandparent, friend or teacher, whose words and actions reminded you of the love that God, the Father has for you and reminded you of your great value?

Responding

Father, I thank you for the people and ex-

periences which have reminded me of your great love for me and every human person.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I prevented others from knowing your great love for them by my hurtful words, actions or posts on social media.

Father, I ask that you grant me the strength and wisdom so that people can get some sense of your great love for them and their value in your eyes by my affirming words and encouraging actions.

Resting

Rest in the loving embrace of the Father by repeating "BELOVED" for as long as it is possible. May you be filled with all the encouragement that comes from resting in the all-loving presence of the Father.

Reflecting

Humility gives a person the opportunity to experience the power of love which gives the power to live with purpose.

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.