

THE WORD OF THE LORD

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Reading I: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalm: Psalm 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30

Reading II: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Gospel: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

- ❖ Complementary themes in today's readings point to the importance of baptism as a spiritual new creation
- ❖ Summary of readings:
 1. First reading: chapter 40 is a turning point in the book of Isaiah, moving from the prophetic warnings of the first 39 chapters to the more promising words of hope in the final section; this serves as a reflection of the contrasting roles of John the Baptist (prophetic warnings) and Jesus (words of hope)
 2. Psalm: a creation psalm where all creatures are called to recognize God's superlative attributes, and especially the way in which He both sustains and renews all life
 3. Second reading: Paul helps us ask the question, "What does all this mean for me?" He reminds Titus that the life of the baptized person must look radically different from that of the pagans
 4. Gospel: points to baptism as a form of spiritual recreation; just as the Spirit hovers over the waters at the creation of the world in Genesis 1, so now the dove hovers above Jesus at the moment of His baptism
 - "You are my beloved Son" is a poignant phrase reminding the reader of:
 - **Isaac**, who on three occasions is described as the beloved son of Abraham (see Genesis 22)

Notes



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- “You are my beloved Son” is a poignant phrase reminding the reader of (cont.):
 - **David**, who is described as a chosen son in Psalm 2, the royal coronation hymn which was sung at the beginning of each new Davidic king’s reign, just as Christ’s baptism symbolizes the beginning of His new reign
 - **Suffering Servant**, who in chapter 42 of Isaiah is described in similar terms

- ❖ Word study:
 1. *Palingenias* (Titus 3:5) - ‘regeneration’, ‘spiritual genesis’ - Paul uses this word to refer to the Sacrament of Baptism
 2. *Ego eimi* (John 9:9) - ‘I AM’ - used by the man healed of blindness in the Pool of Siloam, which symbolizes baptism; upon rising from the waters he can invoke the divine name (see Exodus 3:14) precisely because he has been made a new creation, and a participant in the divine nature

- ❖ Practical application:
 1. **We need to pray more:** Luke often reminds us that Jesus Himself prayed constantly, as we see in today’s Gospel.
 2. **We need to cultivate a sense of the presence of God:** oftentimes when we approach Our Lord, especially in the Eucharist, we do so with low expectations, so it’s no surprise we come away feeling disappointed. We need to approach God in confident hope!
 3. **We need to have baptismal amazement:** Saint Francis of Assisi used to genuflect in the presence of newly baptized children because he knew they had become vessels of the Trinity; we should seek to foster that kind of faith.

Notes

