

Scripture Study

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A



Opening prayer

Isaiah 49:3,5-6

(Ps 40:2,4,7-10)

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Overview of the Gospel:

- In last Sunday's gospel (Matthew 3:13-17), we saw Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist. This week, we see John again a few weeks later, after Jesus has returned from spending 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4:1-11). The time is near Passover (John 2:13) when lambs were brought to the temple to be sacrificed.
- John's mission was to identify the Messiah to Israel (verse 31). He was able to do this because the sign he was to watch for was the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus in the form of a dove (verse 32). Jesus is thus anointed for his role as Messiah (Luke 4:1, 14).
- John sees Jesus walking toward him and points him out as the "Lamb of God" (verse 29). The title would call to mind to his listeners the role of the lamb in the Passover (Exodus 12) as well as the nature of the long awaited Messiah as described by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:7).
- It is significant that, rather than single him out as a great teacher or miracle worker, Jesus is identified as a sacrificial lamb. Jesus as the Lamb of God would figure prominently in later Christian writings. The book of Revelation contains almost 30 references to Jesus as the Lamb (see Revelation 5—7, 17:4. Also, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and 1 Peter 1:17:19).

Questions:

- In the 1st Reading, how many promises given through the prophet Isaiah about the Messiah to come can you identify as applying to Jesus? In what ways?
- In the 2nd Reading from St. Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians, he addresses his letter to two categories of people "in the Church at Corinth" (verse 2). What are they? How do you fit into each of these categories?
- What two titles does John give Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel passage (verses 29 and 34)? What proof supports these claims (Psalm 2:7; CCC 1286)?
- What does John the Baptist mean by calling Jesus the "Lamb of God" (verse 29; see Exodus 12:1-3; Isaiah 53:7)? Where do Catholics hear these words every Sunday? How is it applied to our lives in a real and profound way at each Mass (CCC1293-94)?
- What does it mean to "behold" the Lamb of God? What are you supposed to see when you look at him? What kind of lamb takes away sin (Exodus 12:5; 1 Peter 1:19)?
- How could you incorporate the submissive, sacrificial lifestyle of the Lamb of God into your own life?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 523, 536, 608, 719

Closing Prayer

Remember this week to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

The Holy Eucharist is the perfect expression of the love of Jesus Christ for man, since It is the quintessence of all the mysteries of His Life. -St. Peter Julian Eymard

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

Scripture:

1st Reading: *Isaiah 49:3, 5-6*

The LORD said to me: You are my servant, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Now the LORD has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

2nd Reading: *1 Cor 1:1-3*

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel: *John 1:29-34*

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!



This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Meditation: Why did God the Father send his Son into the world? When John the Baptist encountered Jesus he called Jesus the *Lamb of God*. John did this to signify Jesus' mission as the One who would redeem a fallen human race from sin and destruction. The blood of the *Passover Lamb* (Exodus 12) delivered the Israelites in Egypt from death. The blood of Jesus, the true *Passover Lamb* who offered his life up for us on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 Corinthians 5:7), delivers us from everlasting

death and destruction. It is significant that John was the son of a priest, Zachariah, who participated in the daily sacrifice of a lamb in the temple for the sins of the people (Exodus 29). In Jesus he saw the true and only sacrifice which delivers us from sin.

When John says he did not know Jesus he was referring to the hidden reality of Jesus divinity. But the Holy Spirit in that hour revealed to John Jesus' true nature, such that John bore witness that this is the Son of God. How can we be certain that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of God? The Holy Spirit makes Christ known to us through the gift of faith. God gives us freely of his Spirit that we may comprehend the great mystery and plan of God to unite all things in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Do you seek to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ?

"Lord Jesus Christ, fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit and let me grow in the knowledge of your love and truth. Let your Spirit be aflame in my heart that I may know and love you more fervently and strive to do your will in all things."

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