

The Baptism of the Lord

Cycle C | January 12, 2025

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

Violence and gangs have been a part of my life since I can remember. My uncles and cousins were in gangs, and fighting was the way to settle arguments. The worst beatings I got were from my father for fighting in school, yet I was praised by him for winning a fight across the street from my house. This affected my thought process. A father's praise is yearned by a son. To this day with God in my heart, I still yearn to settle things with violence. When I feel like this, I instantly ask God for forgiveness and flood my thoughts with prayer to change my thought process.

Presently, I am going through the most difficult time of my life; changing from being an uncaring, convicted criminal, who has only been free 3 years altogether since I was 12 years old, to being a God-fearing Christian, who wants to love no matter what, who wants to leave his past behind and live how God wants me to. I starve for my freedom to serve God in peace.

God has truly blessed me with a surmountable amount of love when I have been surrounded by darkness in here. He has given me hope to mend the relationships that have suffered as a result of my imprisonment, and the courage to correct my mistakes instead of running from them. He has shown me that he is with us no matter what. Now I feel comforted and full of faith when I pray to God. I am blessed.

- Hugo, who is in a California State Prison.



PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,

Lead us to renew our baptism in choosing new life in Jesus. Give us the strength to overcome the darkest with your burning fire and bless us with the Holy Spirit.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-73

Thus says the LORD: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching. I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: Acts 10: 34-38

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 29: 1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Give to the LORD, you sons of God,
give to the LORD glory and praise,
Give to the LORD the glory due his name;
adore the LORD in holy attire.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters,
the LORD, over vast waters.
The voice of the LORD is mighty;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

The God of glory thunders,
and in his temple all say, "Glory!"
The LORD is enthroned above the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as king forever.

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

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

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: A NAME, A CHANGE

from the eyes of daniel

i didn't want to go
see this one
but my mother
still had the power
to drag me
and my two brothers
to the water

i looked into her eyes
and they were sad
her face carried
a certain heaviness
that was strong

we walked down the hill
and came to the shore
of the river

i could not believe it
my mom was getting me
into this religious stuff

standing right next to me
was a *paisa*
he looks like he was
from some hick village

he stood
looking out at
this crazy preacher
called john the baptist

after submerging
a young woman
in the strange rite
of baptism
john
the one baptizing
comes over
and says
primo jesus?
whom they called chuy
what are you doing here?

this *paisa* chuy says
john
i want to be baptized
but not alone
i want this family
next to me
to go with me
into the water

i could not believe this
just wait a minute, homes
this is not my thing
i am from jordan locos
this is not my thing

we pray to the dark one
this *paisa* ignored me

john, *primo*
let's go
jesus took his sandals off
and pointed at me
something about his eyes
told me not to mess
with him

so i began to wade
into the water
with john
my family
and jesus

this was too much

i was just glad
none of my homeboys
can see me now
their tattooed horns
would burn them to death

we got into
the middle of the river

jesus asked
what my name was
i told him they called me
ghost

he asked me
how old i was and
why i was so angry

here i was in
the middle of the river
and a *campesino*
from nazareth
with a strong accent
and dark skin
is asking me
why i'm so angry

jesus says
let's begin

john the baptist
shoves all five of us
below the river
i was just about
to complain
to myself again
when it happened

i was under the water
like in a dream
the face of my father

came alive
i saw him beating
my mother
i could actually feel
his punches to my face
i wanted to breathe
but i couldn't

i saw my mother's face
i saw her by the window
waiting for me all night
to come back home
from all my foolishness
i saw the harm
i had caused to
so many

who am i?

screaming below the river
it was totally dark
then i felt the hand
of this *campesino*
on top of my head
it was strong and firm
a voice saying:
daniel
you need to change
let go of all your hate
your anger is killing you
in every way

inside myself i said
yes *paisa*
you win
i do let go of all this evil
it has only made me
more destructive
and so far from
really being happy
or peaceful

i have been miserable
but when i looked
into your eyes
at the bank of the river
i saw a peace
that i have longed
for all my life

yes jesus
i do want to be happy
i can't lie
the way i live
has only let me
fall into self-hate
so deep
that i am afraid of it

jesus

help me change
with this baptism

finally
jesus took his hands
off my head
and i emerged
from the river
from the darkness
i was baptized

my mother looked at me
and she knew
something had changed

her son
who always had
an attitude who
was always angry
was actually smiling

i went over to my mother
and i whispered:
i am sorry, forgive me
and she said
the most important words
i have ever heard:
of course, son
i forgive you

at that very moment
a voice vibrant
sounded from above:
this is my beloved son
listen to him

it all made sense
of course
this is god's beloved son
and he is inviting me
to be his brother
and son of his abba

i looked over at chuy
for the first time
after the baptism
oh yes
of course he knew...
big *paisa*
you win

and jesus
my name is
daniel



REFLECTION: I remember a time when I chose the path of light over darkness and death.
I remember... I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against
us, and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the
glory are yours, now and for ever.
Amen.**

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the
sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to
his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and
my soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,
Help us to refresh ourselves by taking a plunge
into the thoughts, words, and actions of your Son,
Jesus. Let him bless us with the Holy Spirit and
allow the fire of our faith to burn deep within us.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

