

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (January 12): **Jesus humbly submitted to baptism by John**

Scripture: *Matthew 3:13-17*

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; 17 and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Meditation: Why did Jesus, the Sinless One, submit himself to John's baptism at the River Jordan? John preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3). In this humble submission of Jesus we see a foreshadowing of the "baptism" of his bloody death upon the cross. Jesus' baptism is the acceptance and the beginning of his mission as God's suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:1-4). He allowed himself to be numbered among sinners. Jesus submitted himself entirely to his Father's will. Out of love he consented to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. Do you know the joy of trust and submission to God? .

Jesus' baptism - beginning of a new creation

The Father proclaimed his entire delight in his Son and spoke audibly for all to hear. The Holy Spirit, too, was present as he anointed Jesus for his ministry which began that day as he rose from the waters of the Jordan river. Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all who come to believe in him. At his baptism the heavens were opened, and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, signifying the beginning of a new creation.

Heaven will open for those who bow before the Lord

How can we enter into the mystery of Jesus' humble self-abasement and baptism? Gregory of Nazianus (329-389 AD), an early church father tells us:

"Let us be buried with Christ by Baptism to rise with him; let us go down with him to be raised with him; and let us rise with him to be glorified with him."

Do you want to see your life transformed in the likeness of Christ? And do you want to become a more effective instrument of the Gospel? Examine Jesus' humility and ask the Holy Spirit to forge this same attitude in your heart. As you do, heaven will open for you as well.

The Holy Spirit transforms us in the likeness of Jesus

The Lord Jesus is ever ready to renew and refashion us in his likeness through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit - and he anoints us for mission as ambassadors of his kingdom of righteousness (moral goodness), peace, and joy (Romans 14:17). We are called to be the "light" and salt" of his kingdom that radiate the beauty and aroma of his mercy and goodness to those around us (Matthew 5:13,15-16). The Lord Jesus wants his love and truth to shine

through us that many others may find new life, freedom, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord Jesus to fill you with his Holy Spirit that you may radiate the joy of the Gospel to those around you.

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *Jesus came to be baptized by John*, by Chromatius (died 406 AD)

"John's baptism was looking toward repentance. Its purpose was to bring hearers to the point of experiencing conviction for their offenses. John, however, did not want anyone to draw the conclusion that Jesus himself also came to the Jordan to repent of his sins. So he sets this point straight from the outset by calling him both Lamb and Redeemer of all the sin that is in the world. He who is able to take away the sins of the whole world was himself without sin.

"Jesus therefore descended to fulfill all the observances of the law, and in this context he was baptized by John in Galilee at the Jordan. But John, recognizing the Lord as his God through the Holy Spirit, declared that he was unworthy to bear his sandals. He excused himself from doing what he was directed to do, because he could not conceive that baptism was necessary for the One whom he knew had come to blot out the sins of the world. He rather pleaded that he himself ought to be baptized by Christ, saying, 'It is I who should be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' It is as if he were saying, 'I am a man. You are God. I am a sinner because I am a man. You are sinless because you are God. Why do you want to be baptized by me? I do not refuse the respect you pay me, but I am ignorant of the mystery. I baptize sinners in repentance. But you have no taint of sin. So why do you want to be baptized? Why do you want to be baptized as a sinner, who came to forgive sins?' This is what John in effect was saying to the Lord." (excerpt from TRACTATE ON MATTHEW 12:1)

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit and with the fire of your love and goodness. May I always find joy and delight in seeking to please you in doing your will just as you have delighted in the joy of pleasing your Father and doing his will." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- **World Peace, .**

Lord, we pray for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding; and the endurance to accept the consequences of holding to what we believe to be right.

May we put our trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred.

We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men to commit injustice, nor selfishness make them bring suffering to others.

Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men were created. **Amen.**