Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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“After Jesus was baptized and was praying, heaven opened up and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove..." (Luke 3:21).

The Baptism of the Lord

Is 42:1-4, 6-7; Ps 29; Acts10:34-38; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Luke's account of the baptism of Jesus is layered in imagery and fulfillment of key scriptural passages. The first is the moment of Creation in Genesis when God sees the divine reflection in the world and affirms its goodness. The descent of a dove on Jesus recalls the sign that life is being renewed on the earth after the flood. The baptism by John in the Jordan repeats the Passover and the Exodus of the Hebrews from slavery to freedom.

Jesus is all of these moments, and God affirms his role as the new Adam, the Ark of salvation, the new Moses. "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The same symbolism is present at each baptism. We emerge from the waters of the font as new creations. We are incorporated into the body of Christ to survive the waters of death. We are cleansed and set free from the slavery of sin to live as God's beloved sons and daughters. The grace of the sacrament is meant to guide us to realize the potential of these symbols in the way we live.

Baptism begins a lifelong journey. Each time we bathe we are reminded of its cleansing effects, its power to wash away the failures of yesterday to emerge renewed today. Each life stage decision reminds us of the gift of freedom we received that enables us to change when we need a fresh start.

And always, no matter how mired in sin we find ourselves, we hear God's voice calling us “Beloved,” receiving us with mercy and encouraging us to continue the journey. No suffering or loss can take that away. Hope awaits us at every turn and in each new chapter in our lives.

The Baptism of the Lord is the feast of all our baptisms, as the full pilgrimage of the People of God is renewed in each of us. This is the joy of the Gospel.

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