

2nd Sunday of the Year A

First Reading Isaiah 49:3.5-6

The Lord said to me, "You are my servant (Israel) in whom I shall be glorified"; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord, my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: "It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

Gospel John 1:29-34

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, "Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water." John also declared, "I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God."

Meditation

Faithful to his role as precursor, John the Baptist turns the attention of the people of Jerusalem away from himself. They are forced to inquire whom he means when he says: "There is one among you whom you do not recognize" (John 1:26). John himself is the "voice" of the "Word" whom he precedes. According to Jewish tradition, the Messiah had to remain hidden until Elijah anointed him and publicly revealed him to Israel. On the day on which John baptized his cousin Jesus he recognized him as Messiah and gave witness. He saw the Spirit of God come down upon Jesus in the Jordan. Enlightened by the Scriptures, he recognized in him the Lamb of God, the Servant of God chosen to baptize in the Spirit. "This is God's chosen One" (John 1:34). In presenting Jesus the Fourth Gospel announces the baptism of death which he must receive to take away the sin of the world. But it also suggests Christ's superiority and divine pre-existence which are recognized by the Baptist: "He was before me" (John 1:30). There are two ways in which the testimony of this gospel to Jesus Christ can be emptied of its meaning. We can raise Jesus up to the heavens, proclaiming him an inaccessible God whose salvation is confined to eternity. Or we can abase him, seeing in him nothing more than a compassionate human being. We can totally identify the Christ with neither earth nor heaven.

"Because of his infinite love he became what we are, in order to perfect us to be what he is."
(Irenaeus of Lyons)