On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. Mk 2:10-11 NABRE

**Reading I: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7**

**WHO’S YOUR DADDY?** A strong self-identity is essential because it reinforces our character. Self-identify builds self-confidence. Self-confidence enables us to identify our strengths and ignites the inner fire that makes us unique. The events of 2020 have tested our identity as parents, children, citizens, clergy, leaders, and yes, as Christians. What does it mean to be a Christian during a crisis? Are we survivalists? Is our health and the health of our family more important than the health and safety of others? The answers to these questions reveal much about our identity as Christians.

God intends for all people to find their identity in His Son, Jesus Christ. The source of our identity as Christians is our Baptism. Through baptism we become new creations. The old creation makes way for a new life in Jesus Christ. In Baptism we know our “Daddy” is the Creator of the Universe. Though many of us may not have a positive relationship with or even know our earthly father, we can identify with our heavenly father. In Baptism we are immersed into the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to ascertain the will of the Father through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism, we know our Daddy and can hear His voice.

In Second Isaiah (Chapters 40-55), there are a series of oracles that describe the “Servant of Yahweh.” Christian tradition and the New Testament have seen these oracles as messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The verses in this Sunday’s reading describe the Messiah King who will have the qualities of priest, prophet, and king. He is “chosen” and supported by God (vv. 1-4). These are the words that are repeated in God’s voice in the Gospel reading as Jesus was baptized (Lk. 3:22, Mk. 1:11, Mt. 3:17). Through Baptism, we are anointed as priests and prophets. We become children of God and coheirs with Jesus.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God was bestowed on kings, priests, and prophets. The Spirit of God aided His Servant to proclaim justice to the nations. He is humble and does not seek attention. His mercy and kindness are given to all, especially the defenseless and the weak (see reed and wick vv. 2-3). The Servant was called, *taken by the hand*, and kept by God. He knew His Daddy! He was a light to the nations and freed captives. The Servant knew His Father, heard His voice, and served with justice and peace. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Name one characteristic that you and “Servant of Yahweh” have in common? What does it mean to be a Christian during a crisis?

**SERVANT OF THE LORD**

According to Isaiah, the Servant of the Lord would “bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Isa 42:1) and establish “justice in the earth” (Isa 42:4). He would bring Jacob back to the Lord (Isa 49:5) and would be “a light to the Gentiles” (Isa 49:6). He would not hide His face from shame and spitting (Isa 50:6). He would be the sin-bearing Servant, giving His life for the redemption of His people (Isa 52:13-53:12).

Through Jesus the ancient mission given by God to Abraham—to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1-3)—is now entrusted to the church. …

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**Reading II Acts 10:34-38**

**WHO’S YOUR DADDY?** In these verses, St. Peter’s knew his “Daddy”. He identified with Jesus as the Son of God. He preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion. Cornelius and his entire family became identified with Jesus Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism.

St. Peter’s sermon in verses 34-43 begins with the baptism of John and ends with the commission of Jesus to preach the good news. He proclaimed that all nations could identify with God the father. He taught that we all have a Divine Daddy who shows no partiality (v. 35). He then showed how this Divine Daddy anointed His Divine Son, Jesus, with baptism by John the Baptist. The anointing of Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit of God refers to the descent of the visible form of the Holy Spirit at Jesus’ baptism. The words of the Father identified Him as the Son, the Messiah, in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The anointing was the moment of the inauguration of Jesus’ ministry, just as priests and kings were anointed when they took office (v. 38). DISCUSSION QUESTION: When were you anointed as a servant of God?
Gospel Mark 1:7-11

WHO’S YOUR DADDY? A Father or Dad can be described as someone who holds you when your cry, scolds you when you break the rules, shines with pride when you succeed, provides for your needs, does not abandon you, and has faith in you when you fail. This is the image of Our Father who is in heaven. He is close to us through His Son Jesus Christ. That’s why we call Him “Abba” or “Daddy”. To survive this COVID-19 Pandemic, it is important that we know, who’s your Daddy? Our Daddy wants us to know that He does not lead us around difficulties, but our faith in Him leads us through difficulties. He wants us to know that flowers don’t grow, unless they have been pelted and nourished by rain. That is why we must know our Daddy. Who’s your Daddy?

We end the celebration of Christmas, not with Jesus as an infant but with Jesus the adult male who is baptized by John the Baptist. This is the beginning of His ministry. His identity with God the Father is solidified which gives purpose to His mission of redemption.

In the Gospel, God affirms the mission of Jesus before it begins and not as a result of any accomplishments. His perfections are substituted for Israel’s imperfections. Through His mission of salvation, all nations (second reading) have become the children (sons) of God. It is only through our identity in Jesus Christ and responding to the direction of the Holy Spirit that we can find the purpose and strength to overcome life’s barriers and obstacles. Here are some reasons to know your Daddy.

1) He will give you your purpose. Knowing that you have a heavenly Father means knowing your mission or purpose in life, which is to know, love, and serve Him. St. Mark does not explain why Jesus went to the Jordan valley (v. 9). We can assume that He understood that John’s ministry was a prelude to His. He did not submit to baptism as a sinner, but in complete solidarity with mankind. Jesus’ baptism is an anticipation of His Passion. His immersion into the water is a symbol of His death (Ps. 69: 2-3, 124:4-5, Mk. 10:38).

2) Your Daddy Overcomes Barriers. Sin created a barrier between man and God (Isa. 59:2). God would come down to His people once they had been purified (Exod. 19:10-11). When Jesus came out of the water, the heavens were “torn” apart, as sign that the barrier between God and Man had been removed. Israel had prayed for this event (Is. 63:19). Their prayers were answered in Jesus, the Son of God. The same word “tear” is used at crucifixion, when the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom. With the shattering of barriers comes a new beginning. The dove descending on Jesus recalls the Spirit of God hovering over the waters at creation (Gen 1:2). This was the beginning of His ministry and a turning point in His life. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit (Isa 61:1). He is the Messiah King on whom the Spirit rests. He reigns because He and the Father are one. He gives us purpose and strength. Do you know your Daddy?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Has God given you a new beginning during this Pandemic?

Pray About It!

Monday
Read Mark 1:10-11. How does your Baptism enable you to serve others?

Tuesday
Read Acts 34-36. Are others harmed when you show partiality among people?

Wednesday
Read Acts 10:38. What does it mean to be Baptized in the Spirit?

Thursday
Renew your baptism vows today.

Friday
Perform an Act of Spiritual Communion.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS
From The Catechism of the Catholic Church
536 The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God’s suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” Already he is anticipating the “baptism” of his bloody death. Already he is coming to “fulfill all righteousness,” that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father’s will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father’s voice responds to the Son’s acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to “rest on him.” Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism “the heavens were opened”—the heavens that Adam’s sin had closed—and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation.


This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver, Blessed Sacrament St. Joan of Arc, St. Augustine and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. 2021.