

January 3th (Weekdays of the Christmas season)

Gospel text (Jn 1,29-34): John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, «There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. It is he of whom I said: ‘A man comes after me who is already ahead of me, for he was before me’. I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing to prepare for him, so that he might be revealed in Israel». And John also gave this testimony, «I saw the Spirit coming down on him like a dove from heaven and resting on him. I myself did not know him but God who sent me to baptize told me: ‘You will see the Spirit coming down and resting on the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit’. Yes, I have seen! and I declare that this is the Chosen One of God».

«I have seen! And I declare that this is the Chosen One of God»

Fr. Higinio Rafael ROSOLEN IVE
(Cobourg, Ontario, Canada)

Today, St. John the Baptist testifies about the baptism of Jesus. Pope Francis reminded us «Baptism is the Sacrament on which our faith is based, and which grafts us to Christ and His Church, as living members»; and added: "It is not a mere formality! It is an act that touches the depth of our existence" A baptized child is not the same than a non-baptized child. A baptized person is not the same than a non-baptized person. "With the Baptism, we are immersed in that inexhaustible fount of life that is the death of Jesus, the greatest act of love of all history; and thanks to this love we are able to live a new life, no longer at the mercy of evil, sin and death, but rather in communion with God and with our brothers»

We have listened to the two main effects of Baptism taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (p. 1262-1266):

«Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world» (Jn 1:29). One effect of Baptism is the purification from sins, that is, all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins as well as all the penalties of sin.

«The Spirit comes down», «baptizes with the Holy Spirit» (John 1.33): Baptism makes us become a "new creation", God's foster children sharing the divine nature, members of Christ, joint-heirs with Him and temples of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit — gives us the sanctifying grace, which makes us capable of believing in God, to wait on Him and to love Him; to live and act under the motion of the Holy Spirit through its gifts; to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.

Let us therefore ask, as Pope Francis urges us, «for the grace of the memory of our Baptism», «living out our Baptism every day as the present reality in our lives».

«I have seen! and I declare that this is the Chosen One of God»

+ Fr. Antoni ORIOL i Tataret
(Vic, Barcelona, Spain)

Today, this fragment of Saint John's Gospel shows a characteristic testimonial dimension. A witness is somebody who declares somebody else's identity. John the Baptist is introduced as the prophet par excellence who states Jesus' centrality. Let's look at it from different perspectives.

Firstly he states, like a seer: «There is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world» (Jn 1:29). Later on, he says: «It is he of whom I said: A man comes after me who is already ahead of me, for he was before me» (Jn 1:30). He then confirms it because he is very aware of the mission he has been assigned: «I myself did not know him, but I came baptizing to prepare for him, so that he might be revealed in Israel» (Jn 1:31). And finally, as the prophet that he is, he states: «I myself did not know him but God, who sent me to baptize, told me: 'You will see the Spirit coming down and resting on the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'. Yes, I have seen! And I de-clare that this is the Chosen One of God» (Jn 1:33-34).

Given this testimony, which has kept the very same energy within the Church it had 2.000 years ago, we should ask ourselves: Do I contemplate Jesus as the One who is going to save me from moral evil in a laicised society which denies sin? Do I believe

in Him as the One who has always existed, before John, before the world was created as opposed to the current of belief that places Him as simply an extraordinary religious figure? In a world with a thousand opinions and ideologies, do I accept Jesus as the One that makes my life something true? In the middle of a civilization which disregards faith, do I adore Jesus as the One in whom the Spirit of God lies?

And one last question: Is my “yes” to Jesus, so absolute that I, like John, can say to the people I know: «I can tell you that Jesus is the Son of God!»?