**OT 2 A Lectionary Catechesis**

**Fr. Alan Hartway, CPPS**

**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

|  |
| --- |
| The Sacrament of Baptism is so central to our Christian identify, that the Church has a second Sunday (when the Baptism of Our Lord is celebrated on a Sunday) in a row to emphasize this and increase our understanding. CCC 536 and 713 may be the two key passages. At the same time Baptism is a multifaceted diamond in our lives. A conversation on reconciliation and sin may also be informative and compelling for our faith to grow. Baptism leads to the service of evangelization. A secondary theme this Sunday is the necessary presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, which enables us to bear the fruits of the Spirit. This Spirit vivifies the Church. At the beginning of the new year, this may be a good weekend to take the “temperature” of the Spirit in personal or parish life. Thirdly, there is the will of God. |

**FIRST READING:**

A passage from one of the suffering servant songs of Isaiah, the first five verses describe the identity and mission of the whole people as God’s servant. Verse 6 is where the passage pivots and turns. Lectors will stumble over the words, “It is too little for you to be my servant. . . “ The evangelizing mission of the Church as the new people God is to all the nations. We are to be a light, not just another form of oppression. The raising and the restoring are works of reconciliation in Vs. 5, but note that the unusual rhetoric of this verse is hard to get quickly in English.

**Vss. 1-6: CCC 713** One of the characteristics of the Messiah is his service begins when he empties himself.

**Vss. 5-6: CCC 64** The prophets prepare the peoples’ expectation for a Messiah; here the teaching focuses on the universal nature of the mission of the suffering servant.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How did Jesus become the “suffering servant”?  Why must anyone who evangelizes be emptied of the self? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why should a parish always be concerned about and work within the larger Church?  From the Baltimore Catechism: Why did God make you (in the womb)? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What is the mission of the baptized and confirmed Catholic person?  How do you help the Church to enable God’s salvation reach to the ends of the earth? |
| **WORSHIP** | How does God show glory through our worship?  Explain the rationale for this whole passage (Is 1-6) to be used to defend the rights of the unborn? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 40, 2. 4. 7-8. 8-9. 10**

The psalmist makes a case for the true worshipper. This is the person who sings God’s praise with unrestrained lips and takes delight in doing God’s will. These are the reasons we exist. Evangelize! One might pursue the train of thought in a discussion of will, and the very old argument of whether or not there is such a thing and that our will is free.

V**s. 2: CCC 2657** The Church celebrates the liturgy in the hope of Christ’s coming. Hope is a virtue.

**Vss. 7-9: CCC 462** We are all here to do God’s will. Our response to God’s call, is the response of the

prophets and Jesus, “Behold, I come to do your will.” This is how Mary responds.

**Vs. 7: CCC 2824** John testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God because he perfectly fulfills the will

of the Father. By Jesus’ will, we are all saved, that none be lost.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why do we no longer offer burnt animal sacrifices to God?  What is the law of God in every persons’ heart?  What is God’s will for us humans? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is your favorite song? How long have you been humming it? Why do you like it?  What is it like to hear a new song you suddenly lke for the first time? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Do you ever finding yourself restrained when others are talking about religion one way or the other?  If you were this psalmist, what is your cry unto the Lord? |
| **WORSHIP** | What is the connection between “waiting” and prayer?  What one thing do you have to offer God? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: I Corinthians 1, 1-3**

The opening of Paul’s letters are typical for his culture; Greek and Roman letter writing was a craft which was esteemed. Today we are reduced to texts, tweets, and emails; there are little remains from our non-material culture. Vs. 3 is the second optional greeting at the beginning of the Mass. Again the will of God comes up in this reading.

**Vss. 1-6: CCC 401** One way of reading the whole of Scripture is from the viewpoint of the sin that fills human history, from which we seek salvation which in turn are grace and peace.

**Vs. 2: CCC 752, 1695** The church first means the liturgical assembly, secondarily a faith community in the world, next in our language we use the word to refer to a specific building, and only lastly the hierarchy. The second citation is at the very beginning of the ethics of Christian communion; “healing the wounds of sin, the Holy spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation.” This is the effect of grace and peace.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the sin that fills all of human history?  What is grace? What is peace? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Have you received the priest’s greeting at the beginning of the Mass into your heart?  What is peace about your life right now?  What does God’s will call you to do in your life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | When people meet or encounter you in the world, are they experiencing peace?  What does the phrase in the passage “with all of those everywhere” mean to you? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why doesn’t the Church’s liturgy just use a normal “Good morning!” on Sundays to greet people?  What is the effect of elevated or noble language during the liturgy? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: John 1, 29-34 John the Baptist Gives Witness to Jesus as Son of God**

In John’s gospel we are not told the story of the baptism of Jesus, rather we are given John’s proclamation of the baptism. Jesus is introduced as the Lamb of God, which points us to the super of the Lamb and his most frequent identity in the Book of Revelations. Here the Church is setting the tone for us, too, to be evangelizers of the Good News and give testimony to our own baptism in and to the world. Note the motif of descent and ascent in the text; this points to the reconciliation of heaven and earth, the re-establishment of covenant bonds, and the larger biblical theme that God visits His people.

**Vs. 29: CCC 408, 523, 536, 608, 1137, 1505** From the perspective of theology, this is the main verse today. In the section on original sin (CCC 396-421) John’s line “the sin of the world” stands out. Yes, it is in the singular. It is our break from God, while God’s plan was for us to be ”divinized.” John the Baptist

is The forerunner whose baptism prepares us. CCC536 may be the key paragraph to read and study. John identifies Christ with the temple’s sacrifices. In the heavenly liturgy, Christ is portrayed as the Lamb. We speak of the “supper of the Lamb” just before communion. Baptism is the most radical healing that Christ gives. Baptism begins to configure our life to his life.

**Vss. 31-34: CCC 486** From birth through his baptism and during his whole life, Jesus in anointed by the

Spirit.

**Vs. 31: CCC 438** The baptism of Jesus is a part of his Messiah consecration by the Spirit.

**Vss. 32-34: CCC 713** This reference has occurred several times in the Christmas season. It teaches the characteristics of the Messiah enable us to know Jesus when he comes.

Vss. 32-33: CCC 536 Refer above to the importance of this paragraph in the CCC.

Vss. 33-36: CCC 719 John’s prophetic role makes him among the first to witness and testify as a model

of evangelization.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What did you learn about baptism from these readings?  What do the teachings of CCC536 and 713 mean for you? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How has your own baptism configured your life to the life of Christ?  How does your life testify to the life of Christ in you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | What does baptism in the Holy Spirit do to you faith?  What are the characteristics of the Messiah, Savior, Christ? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why is the Eucharist called the “supper of the Lamb”?  When is the Holy Spirit during the Mass called down upon the gifts of bread and wine? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 3 A: Isaiah 8, 23-9,3; Psalm 27; I Corinthians 1, 10-13. 17; Matthew 4, 12-23**