Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-38

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

The voice of the Lord is over the waters/ the Lord, over vast waters.

The voice of the Lord is mighty;/ the voice of the Lord is majestic.

The glory of the Lord thunders,/ and in his temple all say, “Glory!”

The Lord is enthroned above the flood;/ the Lord is enthroned as king forever. Psalm29

This majestic God full of energy and might, is born in a stable next to cows and sheep. He gives up his throne in heaven and is born to a woman just like us. Why? Because he likes us. He wants to bring us Good News that God is with us and loves us like a father or grandfather loves his children. He learns to be like us. His energy spills out as a teenager as we read last week – worrying his mother and step-father. So Jesus tamps down his energy and becomes obedient to the will of his parents.

He learns, this week, to be even more human. His cousin, John, is symbolically washing people to prepare them to help prepare the way of the Kingdom of God. They willingly assent to turn their lives around. So does Jesus. He is willing, now as an adult, to change his life around and allow the energy and power of the divine to shine through him. That is why John tells his people that he only baptizes with water but the one coming after him will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire – energy upon energy. The Gospel says Jesus then prays. I think he is talking with his Father as to how Jesus is to bring the message to God’s people. Jesus accepts the challenge (knowing that with the joy of being human comes also pain and sorrow.) The Father is well pleased with his Son and sends the Holy Spirit upon Jesus to validate Jesus’ new beginning. Jesus will have the power that is divine which power brings new life to the world. Luke says it is a visible sign for people to see.

This man from Nazareth is now divinely appointed. And he has reached a turning point in his life that will at affect not only the people of the Holy Land in which Jesus walks but people of the whole world and people of the whole of time.

As the divine life took upon the fragility of humanity, humanity was animated with the energy of the divine. That divine spark comes available to us at the moment of our baptism. That is why Catholics are baptized as babies. We grow up in and into the divine energy. We make it ours with our Confirmation when we accept the Holy Spirit as part of ourselves. Yet in our fragility, we access the divine so seldom.

Yet it is always there. The Father is always at our side. If we follow the Way and the Truth and the Life of his Son, Jesus, when we call out in prayer the Spirit of God descends upon us like a dove.

All we have to do is call out. “Lord, strengthen me.” “Lord, be with me in my need.” “Lord, where do I go from here?” “Lord, I can’t take this anymore without you.” “Lord, fill me with your light and your love.” “Lord, I am yours. Lead me where you may.”

All we have to do is pray. Like Jesus did.

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold,

My chosen one with whom I am pleased,

Upon whom I have put my Spirit.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.