

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew (*Matthew 3:13-17*)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ God speaks up for those who remain humbly silent

I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me? (cf. Matthew 3:14). John the Baptist was rightly scandalized when Jesus asked to be baptized by him. John had known Jesus is the Christ, the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. As John had pointed out, he was not even fit to carry the sandals of Jesus, whom John knows is the Son of God. However, at the insistence of Jesus, John obediently complied. Only sinners need to be baptized. Onlookers, most of whom did not know the true identity of Jesus, would think Jesus was a just common sinner. But Jesus has more important things in His mind than the opinion of those around. He knows that God, His Father wants Him to set an example. He needs to show how important baptism is – a washing away of all past sins through God’s grace, and making the baptized a child of God.

This is My Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17). Jesus kept humbly silent, not asserting His true identity and not explaining why He, the Source of all graces, in fact do not need baptism. However, God the Father spoke out for everyone to hear. God the Father did the fair thing by Jesus. There are other times too when God the Father manifested His presence to show His approval for Jesus: at the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor to strengthen the faith of the apostles there present; at the death of Jesus: by the earthquake and the tearing of the temple curtain. Yes, God the Father speaks out in various ways that only God can do.

Blessed are You among women, and blessed is the Child You will bear! (Luke 1:42). God notices everything that happens in our day including the times when we are misunderstood or wrongly accused despite our good intentions. When we remain humbly silent and do not let human opinion affect us, God always do something in His own way. This is again proven in the case of our Blessed Mother Mary who was pregnant with Jesus, and who kept humbly silent about the whole thing to St Joseph, Her betrothed. God spoke up for Mary to Joseph in a dream and explained everything (cf. Matthew 1:18-21). When Mary, just conceived with Jesus, visited Cousin Elizabeth, She needed not announce Her privilege to Elizabeth. Elizabeth, spontaneously filled with the Holy Spirit addressed and praised Her in a way suitable for the Mother of the Saviour.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, I am always so vigilant about my rights, my reputation, my good name. Many times I have let the opinion of other people influence my behavior, rather than what You think about me. It takes great self control and humility to remain humbly silent when human opinion is against me despite my good intentions. Let your Spirit within me remind me how human opinion changes like the wind. What is infinitely more important to me is how I appear in Your eyes. Only You are my righteousness. Only in Your sight need I be blameless. Mary, Mother of Salvation, teach me Your profound humility. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.