

## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A

Is 49:3, 5-6

Ps 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

I Cor 1:1-3

Jn 1:29-34

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Last Sunday we brought to a conclusion the Christmas season with the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord. We heard from St. Matthew's Gospel how John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God come down upon and anoint Jesus for his ministry. Today's Gospel from St. John furthers that scene as we hear John witness and testify, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Like John the Baptist we might use today's Gospel as a personal call to become a witness for the Lamb of God, reclaiming our baptismal calling and renewing the vows of our own baptism. The work of furthering the Kingdom of God has been entrusted to us, the baptized.

At every Eucharist in the dialogue just before the breaking of the bread, we proclaim Jesus as the Lamb of God who, by his life of love and sacrifice, has come and continues to come into a broken world to heal us of our sinfulness. It is through our "communion," our encounter with the Lamb of God, that we are called to claim our own baptismal consecration that invites us and challenges us to be partners and emissaries of his healing words, empowered to enrich the world with an expression of God's justice and peace. Today's celebration of Word and Sacrament calls us to claim our own baptismal grace, responding with an active faith through our Christian witness.

We heard today the missionary call of the prophet Isaiah who reminds us of God's call to each of us from the womb of our mothers to be God's servants, a light to the nations, in order that God's salvation might extend to the ends of the earth. Paul speaks to us in the First Letter to the church of Corinth as those who have been sanctified in Christ, called to be holy, called with Christ to further the Kingdom of God, rebuilding broken lives and being emissaries of God's reconciling love.

Through our baptism into the Body of Christ we are empowered and enabled by God's Spirit to build up and free the oppressed. It is through the saving work and love of Christ that we are called to heal the broken spirit of those who are oppressed and who feel isolated from God or marginalized by the Church. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus we are entrusted with the power to mend the human spirit with Christ's redeeming love.

Our call to Christian discipleship might be renewed today if we can ask ourselves the following questions: Who first pointed out Jesus to me? Who or what has nurtured me in my faith-witness all these years? When have I been most challenged to witness to my faith and what has been the fruit of that challenge? Could someone point to my life and say: here is someone who walks in the Light?

As part of the baptismal ritual, a small candle is lit from the Paschal Candle and handed to

the parents and sponsors of the child with the words, "Receive the light of Christ," a light which "is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly." It is through that Light of Christ, passed on to us at our baptism, that we are called to make a difference in this dark world of ours, bringing light where darkness may have settled, love on the road where hatred and prejudice once traveled, and hope to the place where hopelessness once dwelt.

We recognize our baptism as the beginning of a life long process of conversion of heart. We are challenged daily to witness for Christ, vigilantly watching for opportunities to become light for our world. To be light means that our lives illuminate and clarify who Jesus, the Lamb of God, is as John the Baptist did. By the light of our lives may we clarify the priorities of the Gospel which are to live justly, love goodness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6: 8).