

The Baptism of the Lord Year A

Sunday Reflection

Beginning a new life

In *Illegal Tender*, a 21-year-old son, Wilson Jr., says to his mother, “You know what? I am not leaving everything that I have here. I am not leaving Ana; I am not leaving school. Nothing.” Why bother beginning something new in another world? To leave one’s security—the comfortable temperature of your room, your friends, your homeland—and face the unknown adventure.

The Servant of God is a mysterious figure. The Spirit of God rests upon him. He is calm and gentle; nothing unsettles him and nothing crushes him. He does not cry out or raise his voice in the streets. He does not break the bruised reed or quench the dimly burning wick. He brings light to those in darkness and justice to the oppressed. (Isaiah 42:1-4. 6-7)

Jesus of Nazareth is also a mysterious figure. He left his home in Galilee for a three-day journey to Jordan. He left carpentry to meet a prophet in the wilderness. Jesus accepted the baptism of John, though John initially tried to dissuade him. Jesus insisted, “Allow it now.” John consented and baptized Jesus; however, the minister of Jesus’ baptism is not emphasized. To divert attention from John baptizing Jesus, Matthew recounts a series of mysterious events that shift the gaze of the onlookers toward heaven. After Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened, the Spirit descended like a dove upon him, and a voice from heaven declared, “You are my beloved Son.” (Matthew 3:13-17)

We know what happened to Jesus after his baptismal anointing. He set aside his work as an artisan and became a prophet. He preached peace, went about doing good, and healed the sick. The hand of God was upon him. (Acts 10:34-38)

Jesus’ choice to begin a new life led him into a hostile environment. Every day, Jesus faced the danger of death. He was persecuted by civil and religious authorities, and they plotted his assassination. Yet Jesus made the right choice for his life and mission.

At baptism, God shows no partiality. He treats you as he treated his Son, Jesus Christ. He opens the heavens and gives you a new life. God accepts you as you are.

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