

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

By: Fr. Greg Ames

Francesco Scavullo, the famed fashion photographer, died in 2004. He was known for his ability to take his subject, and whether the photo was for an album or magazine cover, transform the person into someone glamorous. He once said, *Somebody's got to come out for a view of life that is beautiful. I know there are times of unrest. But I also know there is beauty.*

Tug McGraw, the star pitcher who played with the Mets and Phillies, also died in 2004. Known not only for his athletic prowess, but for his enthusiasm, he coined the Met's mantra, You Gotta Believe. When he announced his retirement on Valentine's Day in 1985 he said, *Maybe it's appropriate. I've had a love affair with baseball. The game stole my heart, and I was never a jilted suitor.*

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together. Certainly, both were minor players on the stage of life, and each had his own demons. But there was a spark in each of them—as he changed the lens, as he wound up for a pitch—that helped other see beauty, that helped others believe that the odds could be beat and the game could be won.

Baptism is about a spark that has been placed in your heart. A Christian life has nothing to do with your ability to take a picture, or throw a curve ball. It has everything with your ability to know that Christian faith is lived each day, not here, but in all studios, classrooms, cars and ballfields of your life. The spark of faith must grow each day. VISION, PASSION and A REASON TO BELIEVE.

VISION Isaiah offers a comforting and loving image: God is coming, like a tender shepherd, to lead the people, to protect them. Even in times of darkness, Isaiah wants people to see that signs of God's care are all around. For the next seven weeks, the Gospel will show Jesus offering this vision of God's care. But he will expand that vision, and challenge his followers-

those who are baptized-to see things they would care not to see: every day someone is hungry, homeless, victimized, living in places of conflict. The baptized must not turn away: God is there, as much as God is in the moments of loveliness and beauty, and we must go to Him there.

PASSION The Gospel says the people's hearts were filled with expectation. There was a longing, a desire, a realization, even in that century, that life had to be more than just work, and money, and possessions, and getting through the day. Jesus wants his followers to have passion, an inner spark. He wants us to love our lives with integrity, believing that as insignificant as we might seem, we can make a difference in the life others. At the start of this new year, I look at you and wonder, are you passionate about your faith? I do not mean jumping up and down, doing good works all day long. But does your faith in Christ fill you with a sense that God has a purpose for my life-that somehow at work, at home, or at school, I am meant to be an instrument of God's grace.

A REASON TO BELIEVE Sometimes it is hard to believe. Things happen—bad things. Life does not work out the way he hoped it would. And yet each of us knows someone, who in the midst of life's difficulties, gets up each day, inspires us with their hope, and gives us a reason to believe. The challenge for you who are baptized is this: are you anyone's reason to believe. If we simply sit and complain, bemoan—if we let everyone else around us do the work, volunteer, pitch in, do his or her part, take the first step, then we are not living our baptism. Paul tells Titus that in our hands has been placed God's kindness and generous love. And we, for our part, are asked to be careful, faithful stewards of that kindness and that love. The Feast of Baptism of the Lord asks us, how kind are you; what does it mean for you to be generous. And how we answer those questions-how we live those questions— is what might someone a reason to believe.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Isaiah 40:1-11

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 3:15-22

January 13, 2013

耶穌受洗節日簡介

「耶穌受洗」、「加納婚宴」和「賢士來朝」原本都屬於主顯節慶祝內涵，這個事實雖然在彌撒經文中並不明顯，但卻清楚地表在「時辰祈禱」之中(參閱：主顯節第二晚禱謝主曲的對經)。在最近的禮儀革新之前，教會為隆重的慶祝主顯節，制訂「主顯八日慶期」(Octave)，並在慶節的第八日慶祝耶穌受洗。禮儀革新後只保留了復活節和聖誕節的八日慶期，但也訂定主顯節後的主日為「耶穌受洗節」，並作為聖誕期的結束和常年期的開始。

經文脈絡

路加福音的作者在前兩章敘述耶穌童年故事，接著由第三章到第四章 13 節綜合性的報導耶穌公開出現的一些事件：先有約翰洗者的出現、他的宣講、以及被捕入獄，接著敘述耶穌受洗，他的族譜、以及最後他受試探的故事。福音作者相當技巧的將這些故事連結在一起，生動地呈現在福音讀者眼前，藉此介紹納匝肋人耶穌是誰，以及他如何接受約翰的洗禮而開始其公開生活。這個主日的福音選自這段經文當中的兩段短小的經文，前段談論約翰的身份和使命，約翰自己聲明他並非默西亞，而只是一位「更強者」的前驅(三 15-16)；後段則描述耶穌受洗的情況(21-22)，也就是這個主日慶節所慶祝的核心內容。

若翰的聲明

約翰洗者的生活與工作造成相當程度的轟動，很多人因此在心中推想，是否他就是整個民族長久期待的默西亞(15)。面對這個可能的誤解，約翰主動地做出回應加以澄清。他清楚地指出他和那位將要來的「更強者」之間具有絕對性的區別，他「固然以水施洗」，但那位要來的更強者將「要以聖神和火」施洗(16)。

耶穌受洗

路加以非常簡單的方式敘述耶穌受洗的情況，耶穌受洗的情形和所有來到約翰眼前的猶太人完全一樣，路加並沒有給予任何特別的重點(比較：瑪三 13-15)。路加的特殊之處在於他提到耶穌在受洗後「祈禱」，這也是路加福音中常常提到的一點(例如五 16、九 18、28)，而當時耶穌祈禱時，出現了一些特殊的景象：

天開了

首先是「天開了」！路加並沒有更進一步描寫天開了的情況，這一點和先知文學以及默示文學非常的相似(則一 1、默四 1)，路加生活於這些文學傳統之中，採用相同的方式傳達了當時的世界觀。「天開了」所表達的是：天主看見、或者是進入這個世界的可能性。

聖神降下

天開了之後，「聖神籍著一個形象，如同鴿子降在耶穌上邊。」舊約中關於默西亞的預言常常提到聖神降下的因素，我們只舉出兩個著名的例子：依十一 2 描寫由葉瑟家族將誕生一位君王，而「上主的神將住在他內」；依六一 1-2 也特別提到：上主的神將降在雅威的僕人身上(路四 26-21)。

路加採用了雙重的方式描寫聖神降下：(一) 首先指出籍著一個「肉體」的形象(希臘文原文的本意原是如此)，所以是一切在場的人都能看見而且瞭解的(和谷一 10 不同)；(二) 如同一隻鴿子：意思是好像一隻拍打著翅膀、緩緩降下的鴿子，或者以一個類的形象出現。

天上的聲音

除了有可以看見的形象之外，還有可聽見的聲音由天上發出：「你是我的愛子，我因你而喜悅。」這個來自天上的聲音雖然是直接對耶穌說話(你是、、)，然而路加所要表達的，則明顯地的是在場之人都聽見了這些話。就內容而言，這些話是由詠二 7 和依四二 1 組合而成的。天上發出的聲音為前面圖像性的記號做出解釋：耶穌是天主所愛的兒子、上主雅威的僕人，透過這個受洗事件，他按著天主的旨意展開公開生活。這個「愛子」的頭銜所表達的，應該不只是默西亞性君王的頭銜(詠二 7)，更可能是標示出耶穌獨特的出身：出自於天主(路一 24)。

綜合反省

這段簡短的耶穌受洗的敘述，完全不含耶穌的生活或者他個人所帶來的訊息，因此這並不是一個耶穌得到召叫的故事，而是路加採用當時文學形式所表達的「天主顯現」的事件。耶穌受洗是一個歷史事件，路加採用舊約和猶太敘述故事的方式報導這個事件，並且提出他對這個事件的詮釋：耶穌是天主的愛子，在受洗的時候，以一個特殊的方式被天主聖神所充滿(宗十 37)。透過這個敘述他告訴讀者們，教會對於耶穌的信仰是正確的：他從受洗的時候就以獨特的方式被聖神充滿，他是天主的僕人、天主所愛的兒子。這個顯現故事所含有的真理，其最深的基礎是建立在耶穌整個生活上，復活的基督也啓示自己是「子」(迦一 16、瑪十六 17)。耶穌受洗的事件也因此成為初期教會洗禮的基礎和模範，基督徒在接受教會的洗禮時也同時領受了聖神，成為天父的子女。