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January 2009

ORIENTATION

Our celebration of the Christmas Season does not end with the baby Jesus but with the adult Jesus. Jesus' baptism (at approximately 30 years old) by his cousin, John, was the beginning of his saving mission as the "beloved Son." From this point on Jesus goes "public." Like Jesus, our Baptism (whether as an infant or an adult) is a daily invitation to participate in the mission of Jesus and a lifelong commitment. At the heart of this mission is being faithful to the relationship to God and proclaiming to others God's continued "mighty deeds" undertaken for our salvation.

This Sunday also marks the beginning of National Vocation Awareness Week (January 11-17, 2009). At his baptism Jesus is named the "beloved Son of God." With this celebration we are called to recommit ourselves to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. We are also initiated through our own baptism to be the Beloved of God, commissioned to proclaim Good News with our lives.

As a single, married, or woman religious, how will you best proclaim the Good News?

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed:

"One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water;

he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.

On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens,

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mk 1:7-11)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When has repentance been especially important in your life?
- John the Baptist prepared "the way of the Lord." Who has prepared the way of the Lord in your life?
- As Jesus came out of the water as he was being baptized, what did the voice from heaven say? What would you like to hear God say to you?
- What would happen if you went away by yourself for 40 days to face your particular temptations?

PRAYER

Find a quiet place to pray. Let go of the stress and anxiety of the day. Become aware of God's closeness to you.

After a while, slowly READ the gospel passage from St. Mark savoring each phrase.

Take time to RE-READ the gospel passage. What words or phrases stand out for you? Who is speaking them? What do they mean to you?

Share your questions and insights with Jesus. Listen to his responses.

Pray: GLORY BE to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever!

ST. JULIE SAYS

"Tell my good daughters I wish them a happy New Year in which to advance along the path of spiritual perfection. To do this they must work hard to fill themselves more and more with the spirit of our Holy Institute—a spirit of gentleness, simplicity, and humble charity." —St. Julie Billiart, Foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur

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