

klMt 3:13-17; Isa 42:1-4, 6-7; Acts 10:34-38 A Mission from God

When Jake (John Belushi) gets out of prison, he and his brother Elwood (Dan Ackroyd) decide to reform the Blues Brothers Band to raise money for an orphanage.

As they travel the country in high-speed car chases and car wrecks, searching for bandmates, Elwood says “They’re not going to catch us. We’re on a mission from God.”

You are on a mission from God. That is the purpose of life. Like the first reading says, God has chosen you and called you (Isa 42:1, 6). Because you are beloved of God.

Now that the season of Christmas is over, we begin Ordinary Time with a mission from God. Because what happened at Jesus’ baptism, happened to us.

Jesus came up from the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened. At our baptism we entered into the life of Jesus Christ. And the heavens were opened to us.

Jesus was empowered. And we were empowered. The Spirit of God descended like a dove upon Him.

Like St. Peter said (second reading), *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him* (Acts 10:38).

The Spirit of God descended on us. We too were anointed with the Holy Spirit and power so we can bring good out of evil and heal those oppressed by sin, because God is with us!

God the Father spoke from heaven: *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased* (Mt 3:17).

Same for us! Even if we did not hear it, God spoke to our heart saying: *this is my beloved son [this is my beloved daughter], with whom I am well pleased.*

Some say, and I agree, that at this moment, Jesus received a greater awareness of His call and mission that He was sent by God as the Messiah to save us from our sins.

May we too receive a greater awareness that this is our call and mission to pick up where Jesus left off...to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him (Mt 16:24).

Five Hundred years before Jesus, it was foretold by the prophet Isaiah (first reading):

The suffering servant, Jesus Christ, was humble: *...not crying out, not shouting* (Isa 42:2) *...a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench* (Isa 42:3).

Jesus knows our hearts (Jn 2:25), so He leads us quietly and gently toward an interior transformation, rather than pressure us into conforming.

The suffering servant, Jesus Christ, was righteous: *I the Lord have called you for the victory of justice* (Isa 42:6).

God's justice was victorious in the life Jesus lived, a life of compassion, justice and mercy (Jn 14:9). And especially on that cross...when betrayed, denied, abandoned, and bearing all our sins, ...

He still cried out for God's mercy: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46). And that victory was affirmed in His resurrection (Rom 1:4).

The suffering servant, Jesus Christ, embodied the healing love and compassion of God:

*I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations* (Isa 42:6), *to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon those who live in darkness* (Isa 42:7).

That is exactly what Jesus did. And what Jesus did, who He is, and how He lived His life, is a manifestation of who God is. And that manifestation...is a covenant of what we must become for others.

We must proclaim the good news—that God loves us so much He came into the world to suffer and die for our salvation. How? By sharing our faith in word and deed.

We must become a living witness of the gospel, the salt of the earth (Mt 5:13), the light of the world (Mt 5:14) that shines before others, that they may see our good deeds and glorify our heavenly Father (Mt 5:16).

We must proclaim the peace and freedom that can only be found in Jesus Christ to anyone who is a prisoner to sin, to money, to power, and anything that takes them away from God.

We must help anyone made blind with doubts, sin, and a hardened heart, to recover the ability to see with the eyes of faith in Jesus Christ.

And we must set at liberty, anyone rejected and oppressed by society, like immigrants, prisoners, the poor, the sick and the dying. May they, like the prodigal son, be welcomed by us into the loving arms of Jesus Christ.

Because like Jesus prayed at the Last Supper: *As you [Father] sent me into the world, so I [send] them into the world* (Jn 17:18).

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, send us the grace to begin our mission from God where You left off: Your mission of humility, righteousness and love...

so that one day, when all is said and done, when we meet St. Peter at the pearly gates, God Our Father will say of us:

*This is my beloved son [this is my beloved daughter], with whom I am well pleased* (Mt 3:17).