

MEDITATION 5

Mark 1: 9-11

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. ¹¹ And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

There are four meditative pieces to this set of verses...

"In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee..." Like any human being, Jesus was born, grew up and lived in a community and within a family... As much as he was the messiah-son of God, he was also very human like any one of us... And being in a family came with all the ups and downs of family life... the gratitude and the conflict... We will see this in the story that Mark tells...

So where do you come from?... What's your story?... Is it happy?... Is it sad?... Is it both in some ways?... Are feelings warm when it comes to your family?... Or are they more complicated?... In what ways?...

Prayer: We are so grateful for the good things, O God... Give us courage and grace to live the difficult things... the losses... the conflicts... The memories good and bad... What may we learn?... How may we come to gratitude?... How may we make peace with what has been or what still is?...

"He was baptized by John in the Jordan." Do you remember your baptism? Not if you were a baby. But Jesus is baptized as an adult by John as a kind of purification. Why would Jesus need purification like the rest of us? Well, maybe his purification is about discerning what he has to do with his life? Maybe Jesus' purification is about taking up his vocation as messiah of God.

So what's your vocation?... Do you need some purification at this time of your life to figure out what's next and how you are to live it?... Do you need to discern how to better navigate a situation or relationship at this time of your life?... What do you have to learn and discern with more clarity right now?...

Purification is important so that we can become clear and honest with ourselves and maybe some trusted others... But do we also need something more?...

"And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him." Ah, the Holy Spirit... Jesus needs it as

much as we need it... The Spirit in the form of a bird... How may we see and hear God's Spirit seeking us in the sound and sight of birds around us?... Is God speaking to us and seeking to enter us anew again and again if we have the ears to hear and the heart to open?...

Prayer: Come, enter me, O Holy Spirit... as I breathe in and out... come into me and fill me with every breath of air... Help me release the doubt, the confusion, the worry, the sadness, the frustration, or whatever it is that blocks the purity of your flow through me pointing me in the way I may go right now... Help me find my purpose now... Give me confidence that you have a purpose for me at this time of my life as early or late in the day of my life as it may be...

"And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Have you ever been told by someone you respect and admire, maybe someone in authority whose opinion matters, that you have done well, that you are beloved and worthy of all good things?... How deeply warm and empowered that makes us feel, no? Imagine God declaring that to you about you...

PRAYER: Thank you, O God, for declaring me your beloved one just like you did to Jesus... Nothing can empower me more than believing that I, too, am beloved by you... No matter my imperfections and my bad moments and days... No matter my weaknesses, my pettiness, my hidden resentments, envies, things I fail to do as much as the things I actually do...

Thank you for declaring me your beloved because you see the spectacular beauty in me even when I don't always see it...

Purify me at this time of my life... clarify my vocation at this time of my life... Help me navigate my relationships at work, among friends and neighbours, within my family and other commitments... Where may I live more fully into the "Yes" commitments... and where may I be given the courage and clarity to say: "No" or "No more"?

Teach me, empower me, ground me... your beloved... Amen.