Sunday Reading

A Reading from the Gospel of Mark 1:7–11: The Baptism of the Lord

And this is what he 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.”

Focus Questions

1. Who did John the Baptist say was coming after him? What would he do?
2. What happened when Jesus came out of the water?
3. What did the voice from the heavens say?
Why Was Jesus Baptized?

**Directions:** Read the excerpt from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and respond to the Focus Questions.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 536*

The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death. Already he is coming to "fulfill all righteousness", that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father's voice responds to the Son's acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to "rest on him". Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism "the heavens were opened" - the heavens that Adam's sin had closed - and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation.

**Focus Questions**

1. What is signified by Jesus’ Baptism?

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2. In His Baptism, what does Jesus allow of Himself?

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3. What three things is Jesus already signifying or doing at His baptism?

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4. What is the Father’s voice responding to?

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5. How are Jesus and the Holy Spirit linked at His baptism? What is their descent a prelude to?

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**Summa Theologica, Part III, Q. 39, art. 1**

It was fitting for Christ to be baptized. First, because, as Ambrose says on Lk. 3:21: "Our Lord was baptized because He wished, not to be cleansed, but to cleanse the waters, that, being purified by the flesh of Christ that knew no sin, they might have the virtue of baptism"; and, as Chrysostom says, "that He might bequeath the sanctified waters to those who were to be baptized afterwards."

**Reflection Questions**

1. How does Christ’s reception of Baptism differ from our reception of Baptism?

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2. Does the passage above change the way you think about Christ’s baptism? How?

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3. How can we recollect our own baptism and the new life it has given us each and every day?