

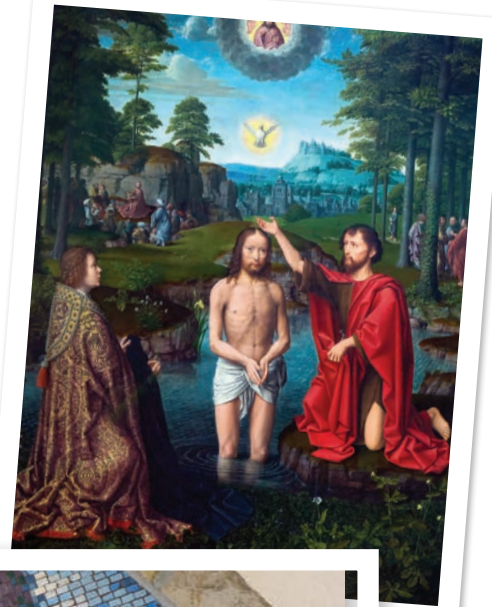


# Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

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## The Luminous Mysteries





## The First Luminous Mystery: *Christ's Baptism in the Jordan*

### *The rhythm of human life:*

The rhythm of human life is marked by birth, original sin, and if we are baptized, rebirth in Christ.

Chapter 3 of the Gospel of St. Matthew starts with John the Baptist proclaiming to the people the need to “repent because the Kingdom of God is at hand”. And “all Judea” came to be baptized because, as the Scripture tells us, *they acknowledged their sins*. There can be no doubt that people came to be baptized by John as a sign of their admission of sin. But then Jesus comes to be baptized! John is quite surprised at this because he knew Christ was not a sinner, but the one who came to save sinners. The difficult question is: how could God come to do what sinners do when they acknowledge they are sinners and seek to be cleansed?

How could God, even in his human nature, ever present himself as a sinner? 2 Corinthians puts it even more starkly and paradoxically: *For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin* (5:21). The Scripture does not just say that Jesus appeared among sinners. Rather Jesus was made sin. Again, how can God do this? This is a profound mystery. We should not try to rush in too quickly to resolve this enigma. It is a mystery, which when meditated on, brings us light and grace, even in its obscurity. As we penetrate in a rather dark way the reality of the Baptism of Christ, we come to sense how deep is Christ's union with us, even with our sinfulness, although he never committed sin or wished it.

*Reflection:* do we recognize sin and its effects in the rhythm of our daily lives? In meditating on the first Luminous Mystery, we come to understand that by *being made sin for us*, Jesus is actively freeing our human lives from sin, and is reestablishing the proper rhythm of our human lives.

### *The mystery of human life brought into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life*

The Baptism of Christ not only frees our human life from the rhythm of sin in the world, but it also brings it into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life.

What is the rhythm of God's own life? It is the rhythm of the Father generating the Son as His Divine Word – so perfectly that the Son is equally God. The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, is the mutual and eternal loving response between the Father and the Son. This rhythm becomes human in Jesus. After the Baptism of Jesus, the Father speaks from heaven, with the presence and activity of the Spirit, saying that Jesus is his beloved Son in whom He is well-pleased. Jesus' life is a response of the manifestation of love for, and obedience to the Father, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit.

*Reflection:* Through our baptism Jesus becomes so united with us that our human lives are raised to the very rhythm of God's own Trinitarian life: manifesting, loving, and obeying the Father in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

## The Second Luminous Mystery: *Christ's self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana.*

### *The rhythm of human life:*

When Christ turns water into wine (John 2:1-11) he does something that at first seems and is very natural: He participates, with his mother and disciples, in a wedding feast – marriage and family is certainly an important part of the rhythm of human life. He becomes involved in a concern that is quite human – the embarrassment of not having enough wine at the wedding feast. He appears to give in to the respectful wish of his mother, even though in his response that “it is not yet my hour” it appears that he would have done otherwise. And yet, he makes sure, in helping the *conciierge*, that it is the best wine.

And so, in this way Christ manifests his divinity to his disciples for the first time. The manifestation of his being God does not just seem to consist in the miracle, but in all the human circumstances in which it was performed.

*Reflection:* In some ways God can be quite human. God not only is creator and master of all creation, but He is very considerate of our human condition, of our human needs, of the role of mothers, of whatever we ask Him, and many other aspects of our life and its needs. He wishes to be revealed to us in that way – as a prodigal Father. And he does this at the request of another human being, his mother. We should be careful not to forget the role of Mary, our mother, in asking Christ for the graces needed by our humanity. In the background or foreground of each Mystery of the Rosary is the continual plea to Mary to *pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death*.

### *The mystery of human life brought into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life*

One of the most mysterious aspects of this Mystery is the question of God's will. We know from Christ that doing the Will of the Father is what life with God is all about, and whoever does the Will of the Father is mother, brother and sister to Christ. Or, to put it again in the words of Pope John Paul II, is brought into the rhythm of God's own life. And yet in the miracle at the Wedding Feast of Cana, it appears that God submits to the will of his mother. Earlier, Mary had given her will entirely to God, when she said *be it done unto me according to your will*.

*Reflection:* In a mysterious sense it seems that when we do God's will – which is the key to harmonizing our human life with the life of God Himself, He in turn is willing and can do our will! This is still another aspect of the harmony of human life being brought into *the rhythm of God's own life*.

## **The Third Luminous Mystery: Christ's proclamation of the Kingdom of God, with his call to conversion.**

### ***The rhythm of human life:***

*Reflection:* If we were to adopt the psychoanalytic technique of free association and I were to ask you, "What comes to your mind when you hear the words *"the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God,"* what would you say? Probably for most of us – certainly for me – we would have to pause a bit and think about it... Would the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God be about the reign of God and His power and justice? Would it be a Kingdom of peace, and the truth of God governing all things? Would it be the glory of God and everyone living according to the way of God?

Indeed, the Kingdom of God consists in all of these and much more. But, primarily, according to what Pope John Paul II is saying in his words on the Luminous Mysteries, the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God consists in announcing God's mercy and forgiveness for all who confess their sins and draw near to Him in humble trust. Christ, according to the Holy Father continues to exercise (the proclamation of the Kingdom of God) *until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation* (#21).

We can see here the continuation of the theme that began in the Baptism of Christ. It means first that conversion to God and aversion to sin leads to baptism. But the struggle against sin and the need for continual conversion to the Kingdom of God continues throughout our human life. This is a key part of the *rhythm of our human life*.

### ***The mystery of human life brought into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life***

*Reflection:* Our continual conversion to God by hearing the Proclamation of the Kingdom of God encourages us to turn from sin each day. This is truly the meaning of each daily trial and temptation and their successful resolution by conversion. As we undergo daily conversion from sin, our lives correspondingly are brought into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life.

## **The Fourth Luminous Mystery: Christ's Transfiguration.**

Pope John Paul II regarded the Transfiguration as the *mystery of light par excellence*.

### ***The rhythm of human life and the mystery of human life brought into harmony with the rhythm of God's own life***

The rhythm of our human life can at times include moments of going beyond ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Such moments give meaning, direction, and impetus to our lives.

Many if not most of us have received on occasion the grace of coming to know Christ in a special way: a supernatural illumination, a grace of union with God or a mystical insight. In such moments God is sharing Himself with us. As such, these moments are signs and invitations from God that he wishes to share his life with us. If we allow Him, he will

then bring about a marvelous rhythm, a veritable symphony, between his life and our life. This harmony will involve both his human life in its various mysteries and his divine life in all eternity. One of the special keys to developing this union is humble, respectful, and sincere reflection on the Mysteries of Christ's life as presented to us in Rosary.

*Reflection:* We need to be careful not to forget or lose sight of special lights we have received from Christ in the past. The 4th Luminous Mystery of the Transfiguration is a beautiful time for recalling such special times with the Lord. Here as elsewhere in Rosary we do not need to think a lot, but may simply be there gazing or remembering, as it were, the insight or the sentiments which we have experienced in the past and may experience anew with the help of the Holy Spirit, and the intercession of the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## **The Fifth Luminous Mystery: Christ's institution of the Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery.**

In the Baptism of Christ, we come to see how profoundly Christ is united with us. In the Eucharist we then experience the fullness of this union with Christ by eating his Body and drinking his Blood. St. Irenaeus says quite graphically: "Saint Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians that we are members of his body, of his flesh and bones. He is not speaking of some spiritual and incorporeal kind of man, *for spirits to not have flesh and bones*. He is speaking of a real human body composed of flesh, sinews and bones, nourished by the chalice of Christ's blood and receiving growth from the bread which is his body."<sup>4</sup>

### ***The rhythm of human life as marked by Eucharist, as the sacramental expression of the Paschal Mystery***

Life and death are the most basic rhythm in human life. Into this rhythm is incorporated: (a) our daily struggle with sin and its consequences – a very real form of death of the spirit, and (b) Christ working with and in us each day to overcome the consequences of sin, which leads to new life in him. This is summarized in the Pascal Mystery; that is, death leads to new life for Christ and then for those who follow him.

Pope John Paul II presents the 5th Luminous Mystery, the Institution of the Eucharist, as the Sacramental Expression of this Pascal Mystery. This means that when we reflect on the Institution of the Eucharist during the recitation of the Rosary, we try to remember that the Eucharist is both the sacramental presence of the suffering and death of Christ and the sacrament of his new life – communicated to us through eating his Body and drinking his Blood. The illumination that comes from this reflection will affect the way in which we receive the Eucharist, and, in turn, the very meaning of our daily life.

The Institution of the Eucharist as bringing our human life into harmony with the life of God himself. At the Last Supper when Christ instituted the Eucharist he revealed to us the deeper meaning of his life in us – that he and the Father would be one in us. This simple statement opens years, or rather an entire eternity, of the vision and harmony existing in our life joined with the life of God himself.



Servants of the Paraclete  
PO Box 9  
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**DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICE**

**Marian Wolaver • 636-274-5226 x303 • [mwolaver@theservants.org](mailto:mwolaver@theservants.org)  
PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016**