



Daily Reflections

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEAR THE LORD?

By Alicia M. Rodriguez

Today's Gospel

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

LUKE 3:15-16, 21-22

Reflection

Today's gospel talks about John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. Towards

the end of the gospel we hear how the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the shape of a dove. God tells Jesus, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

The gospel got me thinking that I, too, am God's beloved; and then I started to wonder: what have I done that is pleasing to God? What does it mean to live a life that is pleasing to God?

As I reflected on those questions I started thinking of Job, who lived a life pleasing to God before, during, and after all the hardships that he endured. In the first chapter of Job he is described as a man "who feared God and avoided evil." (Job 1:1)

Whenever I hear "fear of God" I replace it with "complete and total trust in God." Job lived a life pleasing to God. He lived in absolute trust in God and, even during the hardships that he endured, he continued to trust God. Job also lived a life in which he avoided evil. To be completely honest with you, I find it easier to avoid evil than to trust in God sometimes.

We live in a world that is currently full of poverty, hate, war, and natural disasters. There are times when I am watching the news or National Geographic and I just want to cry and ask God, "Why are you letting us destroy ourselves and our planet?" It is times like those that make it difficult to trust that things will change.

After Job has suffered many losses, God rewards him with a better version of everything he had before he started losing everything. It gives me hope and courage to continue trusting in God and to aim to live a life pleasing to God, just like Job -- one in which I fear God and avoid evil.



Orthodox Icon of Jesus Christ Baptism Scene

Photo by Ron Lach

For Pondering

- Have there been times in your prayer life where you felt that God was saying to you, "With you I am well pleased?" How did that make you feel?
- What are some ways you can practice completely trusting God? What are some ways you can avoid evil?

For Prayer

Dear God,

May you grant me the fortitude to trust you as Job did.

During these hard and difficult times, comfort and strengthen me.

May Your light guide me to a life that is fulfilling and pleasing to You.

Amen.

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