

January 15

Reading 1 IS 49:3, 5-6

The LORD said to me: You are my servant, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Now the LORD has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, the LORD says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Responsorial Psalm PS 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me and heard my cry.
And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Sacrifice or offering you wished not,
but ears open to obedience you gave me.
Holocausts or sin-offerings you sought not;
then said I, "Behold I come."

R. Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

"In the written scroll it is prescribed for me,
to do your will, O my God, is my delight,
and your law is within my heart!"

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

I announced your justice in the vast assembly;
I did not restrain my lips, as you, O LORD, know.

R. Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Reading 2 1 COR 1:1-3

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to you who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Alleluia JN 1:14A, 12A

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us.
To those who accepted him,
he gave power to become children of God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel JN 1:29-34

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and remain upon him. I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

Reflection:

TODAY WE BEGIN again the Ordinary Season of the year. Today's readings speak about two things: the identity of Jesus, and the mission of Jesus. We need to know who Jesus is, if we want to be his disciples. We also need to know what his mission is, if we want to be good disciples. Because a good disciple is also an apostle. By definition, a disciple is a follower. On the other hand, an apostle is the bearer of a message from a superior. The Christian disciple not only follows the Gospel of Jesus but also helps others to hear and accept it also. Who is Jesus? We see him today simultaneously in the role of Lord and Servant. Today's Gospel speaks about Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist. As Jesus approaches, John announces to some of his own disciples: "*There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" Why is Jesus called by this strange title, the Lamb of God? It refers back to the origins of the great Jewish feast of the Passover. According to the tradition, God had been urging the Pharaoh to let God's people leave Egypt. There had been a series of plagues each time Pharaoh reneged on his promise to do so. The final and most terrible plague involved the slaying of every firstborn child in Egypt. But for us - and this is John the Baptist's meaning - Jesus is the new Lamb which brings freedom and liberation from the oppression of evil and sin. He sacrifices himself to take away our sins. Through his death he liberates us. It is no coincidence that Jesus' sacrificial death took place at the Passover. He is the new Pasch; he is the Lamb who both sacrifices himself and is sacrificed to liberate us. Jesus can do this because he is at the same time our Lord and our Servant. Because he is our Lord, he can take away our sins; because he is a servant, he sacrifices his life for us. And he is not only our servant, he is our friend. As he told his disciples at the Last Supper, the greatest love a person can show is to sacrifice one's life for one's friends and he insists that his disciples are his friends not servants. Even more, Jesus is our Brother. The

mission of Jesus is also our mission. We cannot be good disciples of Jesus if we are not also good apostles. To be a good Christian necessarily entails being a good evangeliser. Our duty is not only to save our own souls and "go to heaven". Our duty is also to share our faith with others, help them to know Jesus and his Gospel, and to experience directly the love of God. Where can we do this? In our homes and families, in our working places, in the area covered by our parish. Let us pray that God will help us to work together with Jesus to establish his Kingdom in the whole world and especially in that part of it where we live out our lives.