

## Reflection for the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent

Our 40-day Lenten Journey has begun, and on this First Sunday of Lent we have a Gospel Reading in which we hear of Jesus filled with the Holy Spirit returning from the Jordan, where He had just been baptized by St. John the Baptist. After His baptism He is led by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days. The Gospel of Luke records that while Jesus was being baptized the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from the heavens “*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*” In the Gospel of Luke, we then hear of the Genealogy of Jesus, which is followed by His 40 days desert journey.

At this point before we investigate the rest of our Gospel Reading on this First Sunday of Lent it might be helpful to see what precedes our reading. It is important to note that our Gospel Reading this Sunday is taken from the start of chapter four of the Gospel of Luke. So, what precedes our reading this Sunday in chapter three of the Gospel of Luke. In this chapter of Luke, we find three distinct parts, first the preaching of John the Baptist, second the Baptism of Jesus, and third the Genealogy of Jesus. Only the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew contain the genealogy of Jesus. St. Matthew starts his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus and St. Luke includes the genealogy after the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan. Chapter three in the Gospel of St. Luke is often referred to by the title, “*The Preparations for the Public Ministry.*” Keeping this title of chapter three in mind, the three parts of this chapter can take on a fuller meaning. In the first part of the chapter verses one thru twenty we hear of the ministry of St. John the Baptist, starting in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar and ending with King Herod placing St. John the Baptist in prison, his ministry lasted three to four months. But in this brief period, St. John the Baptist informed the world that the Messiah is at hand. He encouraged all who would listen that it was time to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. St. John also before his arrest baptized Jesus in the river Jordan and informed his disciples that Jesus is the Lamb of God. This brings us to the second part of chapter three which is the Baptism of Jesus. This is the shortest part of chapter three it is just verses twenty-one and twenty-two. But it is in this part of chapter three where we find the heart and meaning of the chapter. The first part of chapter three is preparing for the event of the second part of chapter three the Baptism of our Lord. The third and final part of chapter three is justifying and explaining the actions that take place in the second part of chapter three, being the aforementioned Baptism of Jesus Christ. The genealogy of Jesus provides the proof that through His foster father, St. Joseph, that His family has been faithful to the one true God. From one generation to the next they strive to respond too and follow the will of God. This faithfulness set the stage for the coming of Christ and His baptism.

The three parts of chapter three in the Gospel of Luke prepares us for the events that take place in Chapter four of the Gospel of Luke, namely Jesus’ forty days in the desert and the three temptations that He experiences. With the Ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus and the example of those who had gone before Him is faith, Jesus shows us what has been provided by God, to help us with our own temptations and trials. Jesus had the ministry of John the Baptist we have the teachings of the Church, Jesus was Baptized in the river Jordan, we have been Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Jesus is provided with the example of His ancestors that have gone before Him in faith we have the example of the Saints. Knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, He did not need the ministry of the John the Baptist, nor His baptism, nor the example of His ancestors, this is all provided for you and me. We need the ministry of John the Baptist, we need the teachings of the Church, we need the example of the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, we need our own Baptisms, we need the examples of all who have done before us in faith, ancestors and saints. All this will help us respond in the way that Jesus did when He was tempted after 40 days in the desert. Jesus stood on and quoted sacred scriptures with every temptation, He turned to God the Father. May we do the same every day of our lives, learning and growing in faith, turning to God for strength and wisdom.