

Ten After Ten Session 27: The Mysteries of Jesus' Public Life

535 Jesus' public life begins with his baptism by John in the Jordan... Then the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, comes upon Jesus and a voice from heaven proclaims, "This is my beloved Son." This is the manifestation ("Epiphany") of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Son of God.

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... 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.

537 Through Baptism the Christian is sacramentally assimilated to Jesus, who in his own baptism anticipates his death and resurrection. The Christian must enter into this mystery of humble self-abasement and repentance, go down into the water with Jesus in order to rise with him, be reborn of water and the Spirit so as to become the Father's beloved son in the Son and walk in newness of life.

538 The Gospels speak of a time of solitude for Jesus in the desert immediately after his baptism by John. Driven by the Spirit into the desert, Jesus remains there for forty days without eating... at the end of this time Satan tempts him three times, seeking to compromise his filial attitude toward God. Jesus rebuffs these attacks, which recapitulate the temptations of Adam in Paradise and of Israel in the desert, and the devil leaves him "until an opportune time."

539 The evangelists indicate the salvific meaning of this mysterious event: Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will.

540 Jesus' temptation reveals the way in which the Son of God is Messiah, contrary to the way Satan proposes to him and the way men wish to attribute to him... By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert.

541 "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the gospel.'"... the Father's will is "to raise up men to share in his own divine life." He does this by gathering men around his Son Jesus Christ. This gathering is the Church.

542 Christ stands at the heart of this gathering of men into the "family of God." By his word, through signs that manifest the reign of God, and by sending out his disciples, Jesus calls all

people to come together around him. But above all in the great Paschal mystery—his death on the cross and his Resurrection—he would accomplish the coming of his kingdom.

543 Everyone is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations.

544 The kingdom belongs to the poor and lowly, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts... Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.

545 Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom... The supreme proof of his love will be the sacrifice of his own life “for the forgiveness of sins.”

546 Jesus’ invitation to enter his kingdom comes in the form of parables, a characteristic feature of his teaching. Through his parables he invites people to the feast of the kingdom, but he also asks for a radical choice: to gain the kingdom, one must give everything.

547 Jesus accompanies his words with many “mighty works and wonders and signs,” which manifest that the kingdom is present in him and attest that he was the promised Messiah.

548 The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him... miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father’s works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God... they are not intended to satisfy people’s curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons.

549 By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness, and death, Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God’s sons and causes all forms of human bondage.

550 The coming of God’s kingdom means the defeat of Satan’s... Jesus’ exorcisms free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus’ great victory over the ruler of this world.