

**Needing Epiphanies**    January 2 to Epiphany    Saturday, January 6, 2018    8:15 AM    1  
Jn 5:5-13;    **Mk 1:7-11**    (St. Andre Bessette, religious)    (Jesus apparently in his humanity  
needed this affirmation.)

We are reading today from the Gospel according to Mark, which is the first of the gospels and the shortest of the gospels. Each evangelist brings his own gifts to the gospel, but Mark brings brevity and originality, since it was originally **Mark that conceived the idea of a gospel**. It's not a biography of Jesus; **it's a proclamation of who Jesus is and what his life is about**.

Now in this particular reading we are reading about the baptism of Jesus. Tomorrow we will celebrate the feast of the Epiphany. **The Epiphany actually has three parts**: the coming of the Magi—it isn't really about the Magi, it's about the star; the star is the first manifestation: it's **the star and the child manifesting God**. Then we have this, again, God manifesting. The manifestation comes: **"a voice came from the heavens."** This is the epiphany. **"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."** The third is **Cana, where Jesus manifested his abundance and his willingness actually to die**, since wine is a sacramental symbol of blood and therefore speaks of his death.

What we might note here is that, first of all, it says the Spirit descended upon him like a dove. That means **the Spirit's descent was dove-like** that's Mark's story. Luke misunderstood Mark, and he said, "The Spirit descended in the form of a dove." No, that's not what he meant. He meant that the descent is dove-like, **meaning gentle**. In other words, not like an eagle or any of the birds of prey that swoop down and grab their prey. Doves don't do that; doves are gentle. If a dove descends near you, you could push it away. And so we can push away the Holy Spirit. **We maintain our freedom because the Spirit always comes in this gentle way**.

**Jesus apparently in his humanity needed this affirmation**. Too often we think of Jesus being divine and forget about Jesus being human. His divinity did not destroy his humanity or

impair his humanity or negate his humanity; that would all be heresy. And there have been people who have said things like this. **The Church has stood firm that the humanity of Jesus was full and unimpaired and unmixed with his divinity.** It was not confused. In some mysterious way, which we cannot actually comprehend totally, the divinity and the humanity lived together in the one single person of Jesus. **But the humanity of Jesus was also needy because it is natural to be needy.** It is part of the nature of the creation itself. So Jesus experienced totally human need. He was hungry. He was thirsty. He suffered pain, and he needed affirmation. And this is what he received. **This is the epiphany to Jesus. The first epiphany was toward others;** this is to Jesus himself. **The third epiphany was to his disciples,** who then began “to believe in him,” as John says. **Now we all need epiphanies. We all need affirmations.** And we can be sure that we will receive them in the proper time, in the proper way if we are alert, if we are awake.