

Thoughts on the Daily Word

Christmas Season. Monday 5th January. Readings: 1 John 3:11-21; Psalm: 99; Gospel: John 1:43-51.

If we are unpacking the meaning of baptism, with these men gathered about the Baptist, then it is about discipleship. What is being shown is how a small group of men who have in some way committed themselves to the renewal movement of John now gather together around Jesus. John has pointed out Jesus and now these men bring others to meet him and hear his call, 'come and see'. The overall background is the renewal of Israel, the People of God. These men see something in Jesus that leads them to say that he is an anointed one. They do not understand what the Christ, or Anointed One, fully means yet but they know that the prophetic Spirit has anointed this man and so they gather around. This is like many groups at the time, gathering at the feet of a teacher or 'rabbi'. The love expressed in the first reading, the self-emptying love called agape in Greek, will make the difference from other groups, but that will be a slow process of learning, culminating in the Paschal Mystery. Nathanael moves from contempt, to amazement, and then to worship, laying out the movement of faith.