

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Here is my chosen one. Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7
Peter tells: the Messiah's mission. Acts 10:34-38
Jesus: baptised and anointed. Matthew 3:13-17

Next week:

John witnesses to the Messiah.
Isaiah 49:3,5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3;
John 1:29-34

In a nutshell

As Jesus is baptised by John in the Jordan river, signs of the power of the Spirit emerge. The drama of the moment in which Jesus' identity and mission are revealed is at the same time a powerful outpouring of the Father's love, encapsulated in the words 'This is my Son, the Beloved...'



Abba!

In Hebrew and Aramaic the word 'Abba' means 'father.' It can be a term of intimacy and endearment ('Daddy', 'Dad'), speaking of a very special relationship, that between a father and his child. In the scriptures Jesus addresses his heavenly father as 'Abba'.

A friend told me the story of the day his plane was delayed at Tel Aviv airport in Israel. To pass the time he found himself 'people watching', observing the various human interactions around him. He noticed a young Jewish man with a son who might have been five years old. The pair were obviously awaiting the arrival of somebody with anxious anticipation. Eventually their patience was rewarded. The customs gate opened and out walked an elderly Jewish man, presumably the father and grandfather of the pair.

The little boy could not contain his excitement. Upon seeing the elderly gentleman he went running to him. The old man lifted him into the air, tossed him around and

hugged him. The boy, squealing with delight, went scuttling back to his father shouting 'Abba! Abba!'

'How lovely it was to hear the word "Abba" spoken aloud in a real life setting,' said my friend who is a teacher of theology and therefore familiar with the word's biblical significance.

But there was more. Next, the younger man moved forward to greet the elderly man. There was a second of hesitation between the two, as if some element of estrangement or tension had to be overcome. Then, in an audible whisper that suggested an inner homecoming, the young man breathed the word 'Abba'.

'The significance of that address was never so alive to me,' said my friend. 'Without a doubt, "Abba" is not a term to be left in the nursery. It refers to an adult relationship of richness and depth.' (MF)

How would you describe your relationship with God the Father?



The letter

When baby Jamie Claire was baptised, her family and faith family presented her with a special letter.

The letter is being held in safe keeping until such a time that Jamie is old enough to read it herself. In part the letter reads like this:

Dear Jamie Claire,
This letter was written on the day of your baptism. You won't remember that day, but we will remember it and we want you to

know that on that day you were surrounded by love. First of all, by the love of your Mum and Dad. But also your grandparents, great grandparents, godparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and many special friends.

Jamie, we believe that this love is part of an even greater Love - God who is Love - the One who has known you from the beginning of time and who will never stop caring about you for all eternity.

Jamie, your baptism was a big warm welcome into the Christian family of faith. On that day we prayed that you would come to know Jesus as a friend. We prayed that the circle of love at your baptism would surround you all the days of your life. We prayed that you would discover all the wonderful gifts God has given you and use them well.

Jamie, welcome into the Church, consider yourself hugged by us all.

Think

Does my life show evidence of my baptism by the way I think, speak, act?

Act

Share with another person something about your Christian faith and how it shapes your life.



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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