

EPIPHANY 2
Isaiah 49:3;5-6
1Cor1:1-3
Jn1:29-34

The film Schindler's List is the story of one man's efforts to save Polish Jews from extermination during the Second World War. It is filmed mainly in black and white but periodically attention is drawn to a young girl wearing a red dress. She is a child who suffers the horrors of the Holocaust, but her story is the story of everyone else in the film.

The story of God's people is like that. The story of Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament and since, is our story because we too are God's people. The Servant figure in Isaiah is like the girl in the red dress. The focus is on him as we read his story, and then we step back and see that his story is also our story.

In today's first reading the Servant is struggling. God has not given him the complete picture of his plans but only enough to do what the servant must do. The Servant doesn't know how well he is doing so he complains to God who doesn't give him any sympathy but gives him the good news that not only must he be the glory of God's people Israel, but he must also be a light to the Gentiles and proclaim God's truth to them. So don't whinge to God about your ministry – you may end up with double the workload.

We believe that Jesus is the Chosen Servant and we are called to be his disciples and evangelists. Our Gospel reading tells us that John the Baptist sees Jesus and describes him as the Lamb of God who will not only achieve a new Passover deliverance from the bondage of sin for God's new people, he will be offering the Atonement sacrifice for both Jews and Gentiles. John says this because he witnessed the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit at his baptism of repentance.

The crowds didn't turn to Jesus immediately after his baptism, but two of John's disciples did. One of these was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Andrew had stayed with Jesus for a day and he came to recognise that he was the Chosen One of God. He went to his brother and told him the good news. His brother wasn't convinced so Andrew said, "Come and see." Telling people about Jesus is important, but there is not point in telling others about him unless we bring them to meet him in a faith community of the Church.

Can you begin to see how the stories of the Servant, Jesus, John the Baptist and Andrew are also our stories because our experiences are the same as theirs? Very soon, the sacramental Body and Blood of Jesus will be presented to you as the priest repeats the words of John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

What will your inner response be? Will it "Oh, that's nice," or "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof but speak the word only and I shall be healed." Is part of that healing that you pray for that you might have confidence to say to others, "We have found the Messiah, come and see."

This is the model of evangelism that St John's gospel gives us and it must become our model if we are to be true disciples and evangelists.

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