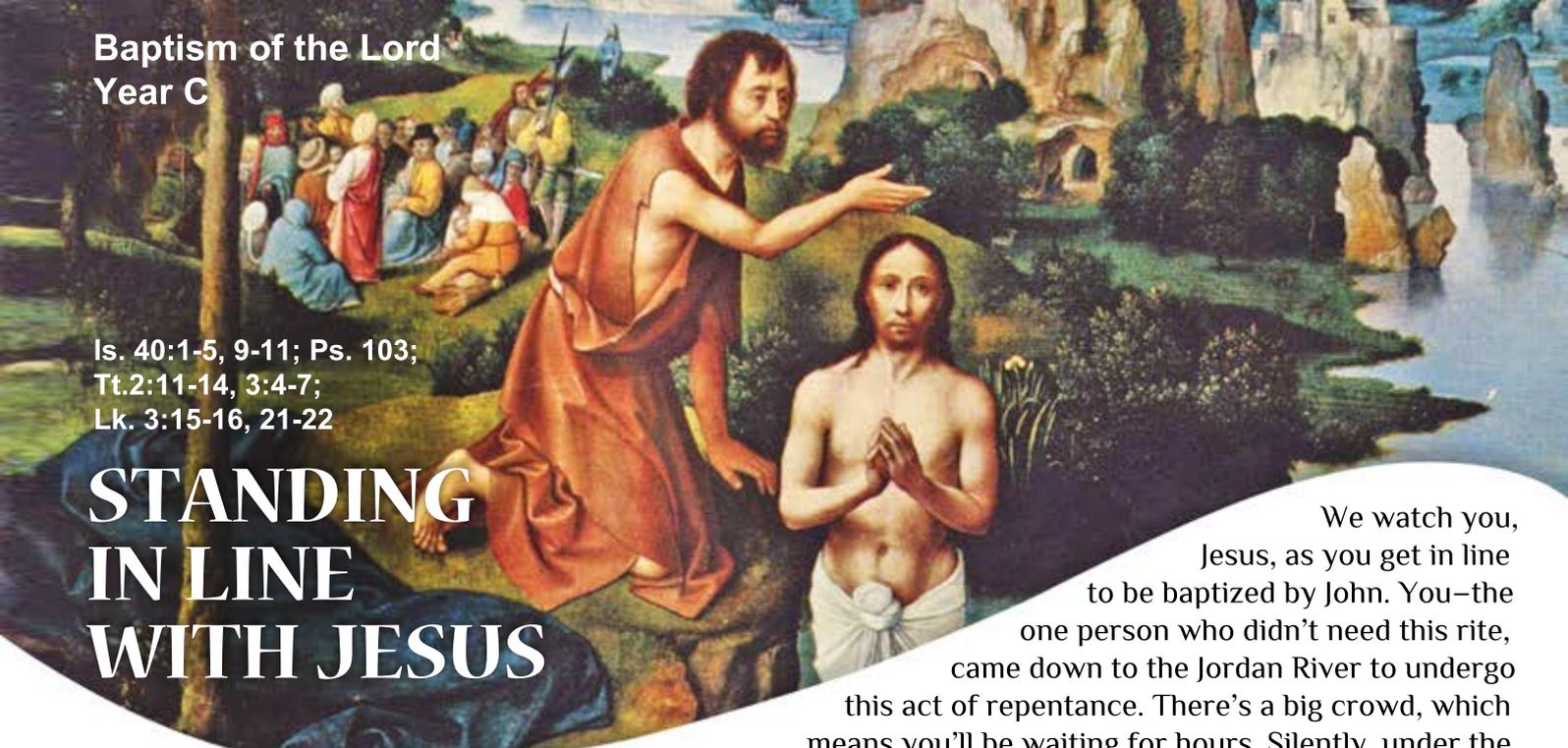


Is. 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps. 103;  
Tt.2:11-14, 3:4-7;  
Lk. 3:15-16, 21-22

# STANDING IN LINE WITH JESUS



We watch you, Jesus, as you get in line to be baptized by John. You—the one person who didn't need this rite, came down to the Jordan River to undergo this act of repentance. There's a big crowd, which means you'll be waiting for hours. Silently, under the scorching sun, you humbly wait your turn.

While waiting, you question yourself about the coming days because you know that very soon you will begin to reveal yourself to the world. You listen attentively to what the people are saying. A little ahead of you is a mother weeping inconsolably because she recently lost her son. A middle-aged couple try to comfort her; it seems God never answered their pleas for a child. Immediately behind them is a craftsman who is very angry with the arrogant Romans and their damned taxes. Then there are all the lame, blind, possessed and elderly people.... Confusion reigns, with everyone complaining about the heat, the long wait, the annoying people they are standing next to....

Between thoughts and chatter the line moves ahead and it's finally your turn, Jesus. You wade into the river and John pours a cup of water on your head—an unnecessary rite for the Long-Awaited One. But you insist. Most of the crowd are concerned about their own problems and consequently few of them hear the voice from on high that says: "You are my beloved Son. With you I am well pleased."

Today too, few people are aware of the revolution you brought to earth 2000 years ago, Jesus. They are distracted by many things and at times are scandalized by the behavior of those who call themselves Christians. You truly leveled mountains and filled up valleys, opening the way for us to escape our egos, our concentration on ourselves, our desires, our reasoning that always finds a good explanation for everything, our continual search for our personal interests that leads us to isolate ourselves always more from others.

If only we could grasp that by welcoming your Word we would discover the most profound truth about ourselves...that we would become capable of communion, of abasing ourselves so as to breathe in rhythm with you. If we could just understand that it is only by surrendering ourselves to you that our Baptism will become the "explosion of light" for which we were created...

## Prayer

Lord God,  
Father of Jesus, my sole Lord,  
in Baptism you raised me  
to new life.  
Infuse your Holy Spirit into me.  
Renew my mind, will and heart  
so that my life  
will be grafted  
always more intimately  
onto you.  
Amen.

*Stefano Stimamiglio, ssp*

