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The Baptism of the Lord - First Sunday in Ordinary Time - 9 January 2022

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9 January 2022

The Baptism of the Lord First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Anthony Doran

Introduction

As we transition from the Season of Christmas to the Season of Ordinary Time, today's feast reminds us of the importance our own baptism – we are not called to be mere spectators of the life in the Church. Rather, we too, are called to be God's beloved daughters and sons.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you were baptised by John in the Jordan to show us the way to repentance.

Lord, have mercy.

You are God's chosen one.

Christ, have mercy.

You are the source of life.

Lord, have mercy.

First Reading

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

From the prophet Isaiah, today's first reading has echoes of our Advent readings which proclaim the coming of the Lord announced by the Lord's messenger. We have long identified this reading with John the Baptist and his call to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103:1-2. 3-4. 24-25. 27-30. R v. 1

Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

Today's psalm is a hymn of praise to God who is depicted as a mighty cosmic warrior who is the giver of all life and whose very spirit renews the face of the earth.

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

In his letter to the leader of the Christian Community in Crete, Paul outlines the reason why we should live good lives – it is our hope for the blessing which will come with the appearing of our saviour, Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

In today's Gospel Reading, John the Baptist downplays his role while at the same time pointing to the greatness of the One who is to come.

Reflection

Today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the first Sunday of Ordinary Time, brings us to a new season. This feast commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist. In the Gospels, the baptism of Jesus is an unusual event. Unusual because it is mentioned by all four of the Gospel Writers.

But even though the baptism of Jesus is mentioned in all four of the Gospels, details differ between the accounts. But all four accounts agree that the baptism of Jesus is a theophany. A theophany or manifestation of the glory of God to the world. For when Jesus is baptised, the Spirit descends on him in the form of a dove.

And as it is recorded in Luke's Gospel, a voice is heard from heaven: "You are my Son, the beloved; my favour rests on you." So following the manifestation of God in the new-born Christ in the stable at Bethlehem, following the manifestation of God to the wise men who visited from the East, we conclude our celebration of Christmas with this manifestation of the Lord at Jesus' baptism.

We know that, in the early Church, as our Gospels were being formed, the baptism of Jesus caused some embarrassment. For, of course, why did Jesus need to be baptised? John the Baptist, earlier in Luke's Gospel, says that his baptism is "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." If Jesus was without sin, why then should he be baptised? The fact that this supposedly embarrassing baptism is recorded in all four of the Gospels, seems to indicate that it is a real historical event. Jesus was baptised. But why?

Why was Jesus, the manifestation of God-among-us, baptised? And what does it mean for us that he was baptised? Is this something, that like the early Church, we should be embarrassed about, and simply just forget?

Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist might seem like a strange thing to celebrate. But celebrate it we do, for it tells us something about our own baptism. We cannot simply separate the baptism of Jesus from the baptism which Jesus instituted for us, for

those who believe in him. Jesus was without sin, so he did not need to be baptised. Jesus Christ undergoes baptism not that he may be sanctified by the waters, but that he may sanctify the waters of our baptism.

So that, when we are baptised, we are made clean, we are sanctified in the waters sanctified by Jesus himself. Just as the baptism of Jesus was a manifestation of God's glory, so too, our own baptism is a manifestation of God's glory. Just as the Father claims Jesus as his son at his baptism, so too, are we claimed as sons and daughters of God when we are baptised. As the Father says to Jesus, so the Father says to us: You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you. Just as Jesus begins his public ministry at his baptism, so too, we begin our life as Christians at our baptism.

Like all our celebrations in this season of Christmas, our celebration of the Baptism of Jesus is not an event of long ago which we merely commemorate today. Rather, it is an event of now. The baptism of Jesus did happen once. But, it transcends the time to which it belongs. For it is an event which belongs to all time. The power of this event, the grace it brings, is present to us today, now, as we speak. It makes present for us the saving plan of God. And we are saved by becoming God's sons and daughters through baptism. And God always wants to save us. Not just yesterday, but today, and forever.



**I have seen and
given witness that
this is the Christ.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

The psalmist cries out 'bless the Lord, my soul' because we celebrate a wonderful Baptism that inspires us, through the Spirit, to offer our needs to God.

Petitions

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church that they will base their ministry always on the ministry of Jesus and recognise the priesthood of all the faithful who have been baptised.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations that surround the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised. May they learn to lead their people in peace.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are suffering from oppression and injustice. May the ministry of Jesus become evident through the loving hands of those who reach out to help, particularly those who work for international service groups helping those who are still struggling with the pandemic.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our own community that we will, through the way we live, show to those around us that Jesus matters.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are currently on holidays celebrating the return to safe travel during these difficult times. May they return home safe and well.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who build churches and places of baptism that they will, through their art, lift us in the Spirit to live our beliefs.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Loving Father, we know that you sent your Son to be our guide to eternal life and so in his name and in the power of the Spirit we confidently offer you our needs.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

Baptised in water. M. Seward/ Gaelic melody. 179
Christ is made the sure foundation. J. M. Neale et. al./ H. Purcell.
Come to the feast. M. Haugen. 400
Come to the water. J. Foley SJ. 403
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 295
Love divine, all loves excelling. C. Wesley/ R. Pritchard. 463
O Christ the great foundation. S. S. Wesley. 483
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour. B. Farrell. 407
Prepare the way. B. Boniwell. 284
Send down the fire. M. Haugen. 475
Song over the waters. M. Haugen. 435
There is one Lord. Taize. 346
The Spirit of God. L. Deiss. 185
The voice of God. P. Icarus/ W. Greatorex. 476

AOV1

Come to the feast. M. Haugen. 151
Come to the water. F. Andersen MSC. 74
Joy to the world. I. Watts/ G. F. Handel. 170
Praise to you, O Christ our saviour. B. Farrell. 28

AOV2

Send down the fire. M. Haugen. 164
There is one Lord. O. Alstott. 148

AOV4Kids

We are children of the living God. K. Sherman CSJ. 15

CWB

Seek, O seek the Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 802
When Jesus comes to be baptised. Stanbrook Abbey. 858

CWBII

Baptised in water. Michael Seward. 99
When Jesus comes to be baptised. Stanbrook Abbey. 282
When John baptised by Jordan's river. Timothy Dudley-Smith. 284
Come to the water. Frank Andersen MSC. 473
Like a shepherd. Bob Dufford SJ. 538
Seek, O seek the Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 595

S&S2

Cry out with joy. Joshua Blakesley. 289

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 103: *O bless the Lord, my soul!*
Psalm 103: Percy Jones. CWB 199
Psalm 104 (103): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 24
The Lord will bless his people with peace. LPC Marty Haugen pg.27

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Fill every valley (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]]
Holy Spirit, come (TCS) [Gifts, Reflection]
Holy Spirit of fire (SHOF) [Gifts, Reflection]
Hearts on fire (SHOF/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]