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Baptism of the Lord - 12 January 2025

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12 January 2025

The Baptism of the Lord First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Andrew Doohan

Introduction

As we begin Ordinary Time, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, just as we begin our journey of faith through Baptism.

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

Through Isaiah, God provides comfort and hope to God's people, promising care and deliverance. For Christians, this is a prophecy of God's salvation, which is fulfilled upon the arrival of Christ.

Responsorial Psalm

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

O, bless the Lord, my soul!

The Psalmist praises God's divine wisdom for creating the universe beautiful and life-giving.

Second Reading

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

In Christ, we have been saved, receiving God's grace and mercy. This gracious act of God calls us to righteousness in living, while we wait in hope for the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reading

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Faced with the ministry of John the Baptist, people wondered if he was the Promised One, which John strenuously denied. John continues his ministry and baptises Jesus, the Holy Spirit descends, and a voice speaks from heaven.

Reflection

Today, we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, which marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and reveals Jesus as the beloved Son of God. This feast is not only about the baptism of Jesus but also about the meaning of baptism for all of us, the new life it offers, and how it calls us to share in the mission of Christ.

Our first reading from the prophet Isaiah opens with words of comfort, hope, and renewal for a people longing for deliverance. Isaiah speaks of a voice crying out in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. The valleys will be lifted up, the mountains made low, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

This prophecy finds its fulfilment in John the Baptist, who prepares the way for Jesus. John's call for repentance is a call for levelling the obstacles in our lives that keep us from fully experiencing God's presence. Just as the ancient Israelites waited for liberation, we, too, await a deeper freedom—the freedom from sin and separation from God.

The imagery of valleys and mountains being transformed reminds us that God is actively working to make a path for grace in our lives, and baptism is the sacrament through which this grace is powerfully at work.

In our second reading from the letter to Titus, we hear, 'God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race'. Embodied in Jesus, this grace teaches us to live upright and godly lives. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we are redeemed from all lawlessness making us a people eager to do good works.

But the letter goes even further: it tells us that God's mercy, not our works, saves us through 'the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit.' Here, the connection to baptism is made explicit. Baptism is not just a ritual—it is a transformative encounter with God's mercy, through which we are cleansed from sin and given a share in the divine life.

The baptism we receive is not just a singular event; it is an ongoing call to live in the grace of God, renouncing sin and striving for holiness. In this way, our lives reflect the dignity and mission given to us in baptism.

In the Gospel of Luke, we see the beautiful moment when John baptises Jesus in the Jordan. Luke describes how the heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit descended

upon Jesus like a dove, and a voice from heaven declared: 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Jesus' baptism is unique because there was no sin for which he had to repent. Yet Jesus entered the waters of baptism to identify with sinners and show us the path of obedience and humility. Jesus' baptism is a revelation of his identity as the beloved Son, an affirmation that Jesus is the one anointed by God to bring salvation to the world.

For us, this moment reveals not only who Jesus is but also the significance of our own baptism. In baptism, we are united with Christ in his death and resurrection, and we, too, are declared beloved sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus, is also given to us, empowering us to live out our calling as children of God.

What does it mean for us to live as baptised Christians? First, it means we are called to continually turn away from sin and seek the grace of God in our lives. Just as Jesus was affirmed in his identity at his baptism, so too are we given a new identity in baptism. We are no longer defined by our past sins or failures but by the love and mercy of God.

Second, we are called to live out our baptismal mission. This involves not only personal holiness but also a commitment to love and serve others. As the reading from Titus reminds us, we are saved not for our own sake alone but to be a people 'with no ambition except to do good.' Our baptism commissions us to actively participate in God's work of salvation in the world.

As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, let us remember the great gift of our baptism. In baptism, God has claimed us, filled us with the Holy Spirit, and called us to share in Christ's mission. Like Jesus, we are God's beloved.

May we live each day in the grace of our baptism, striving to grow in holiness, serving others with love, and proclaiming the good news of salvation to the world.



**The Spirit, the water and
the blood give witness.**

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 and bring an end to violence and conflict.

(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 to survive.

(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

The Baptism of the Lord, Year C (12 January 2025)

| Title | AOV | AOV2 | AOVK | CWB | CWBII | GA |
|--------------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-----|
| Baptised in water | | | | | 99 | 179 |
| Come to the feast | 151 | | | | | 400 |
| Come to the water (Andersen) | | | | | 473 | |
| Come to the water (Foley) | 74 | | | | | 403 |
| Joy to the world | 170 | | | 728 | 265 | 295 |
| Like a shepherd | 160 | | | | 538 | 467 |
| Love divine, all loves excelling | | | | | | 463 |
| O Christ the great foundation | | | | | | 483 |
| Praise to you, O Christ our saviour | 28 | | | | | 407 |
| Prepare the way | | | | | | 284 |
| Seek, O seek the Lord. | | | | 802 | 595 | |
| Send down the fire | | 164 | | | | 475 |
| Song over the waters | | | | | | 435 |
| There is one Lord (Alstott) | | 148 | | | | |
| There is one Lord (Taizé) | | | | | | 346 |
| The Spirit of God | | | | | | 185 |
| The voice of God | | | | | | 475 |
| We are children of the living God | | | 15 | | | |
| When Jesus comes to be baptised | | | | 858 | 282 | |
| When John baptised by Jordan's river | | | | | 284 | |

| Title | S&S2 |
|------------------|------|
| Cry out with joy | 289 |

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 103: *O bless the Lord, my soul!*

| | CWB | JOBC | LPC |
|-----------|-----|--------|--------|
| Psalm 103 | 199 | pg. 24 | 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]