

Sunday Message

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • 8 January 2023 • Psalter Week 1



CALLED AND CHOSEN

(MATTHEW 3:13-17)

Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It always comes at the end of the season of Christmas.

It represents that moment when Jesus begins his public ministry, when he leaves his old life behind and starts anew, filled with the Spirit and a burning desire to make known God's plan for the world. For him, after the events of today, nothing would ever be the same again.

Almost sixty years ago, the bishops at Vatican II published the Constitution on the Church, called *Lumen Gentium*. This document brought about a profound change in the understanding of baptism. The bishops emphasised that by virtue of the sacrament of baptism, we are all the People of God; that through baptism, we all share a fundamental equality and unity and share a common responsibility to preach the Gospel.

Baptism makes us one. It calls us into discipleship and impels us to go out into the world to make known God's saving plan. As with Jesus, so also with us – our baptism means that nothing can ever be the same for us again. ■

DO

Think about your baptism and your baptismal promises. How well are you keeping them?

SAY

Lord, help me to witness to my baptismal promises as best I can.

LEARN

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a celebration of every Christian's baptism and vocation.

Through baptism, we are united with Christ as his brothers and sisters and with God as our Father in heaven.

PRAY

Visit the baptismal font in your church or where you were baptised. Pray for yourself and all those baptised there.



REFLECT

When we were baptised, shortly after the water was poured over us, the priest anointed our heads with the oil of chrism. As he did so, he said, "As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life." From baptism, we receive our dignity as Christians and are drawn into unity with Jesus, sharing in his triple dignity as priest, prophet, and king.

And that's a good way to think about what our baptism means and its implications for how we should live. Through baptism, we share in the priesthood, prophetic mission and kingship of Jesus.

First, we share in the priesthood of Jesus. Each of us shares in the priesthood of Jesus through the worship we offer God, through our lives of prayer and

participation in the sacraments. Prayer was at the heart of Jesus' life. It was the fuel that kept him going. Christians are people who pray all the time. That's what sharing in the priesthood of Jesus means.

How well or often do you pray?

Second, through baptism, we share in Jesus' dignity as prophet. To be a prophet is to speak of God's kingdom with courage and conviction. It is to witness to the Gospel in what we do and say. It is to speak out against injustice, point to the truth, oppose oppression and wrongdoing, and risk everything for the sake of God's kingdom. That's what Jesus did. It's why he ended up hanging from a tree. That's what sharing in the prophecy of Jesus means.

How prophetic are you in your living and in your words?

Third, through baptism, we share in the kingship of Jesus. To share in the kingship of Jesus is to be someone who serves others. It's a very different idea of monarchy from how the world understands it. Jesus was an upside-down ruler who washed people's feet and had nowhere to lay his head. His rule was all about service. That's what sharing in the kingship of Jesus means.

What kind of ruler are you?

When we try to imitate Jesus, when we worship, act prophetically, and rule as he did, we can be sure that God will be very proud of us, also.

What kind of priest, prophet and ruler are you? ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

After the Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened,
and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove,
and the voice of the Father thundered:
This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptised in the River Jordan
and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 42:1-4. 6-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.
I have endowed him with my spirit
that he may bring true justice to the nations.
He does not cry out or shout aloud,
or make his voice heard in the streets.
He does not break the crushed reed,
nor quench the wavering flame.
Faithfully he brings true justice;
he will neither waver, nor be crushed
until true justice is established on earth,
for the islands are awaiting his law.
I, the Lord, have called you to serve the
cause of right;
I have taken you by the hand and formed
you;
I have appointed you as covenant of the
people and light of the nations,
to open the eyes of the blind,
to free captives from prison,
and those who live in darkness from the
dungeon.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 28

Response:

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

- O give the Lord you sons of God,
give the Lord glory and power;
give the Lord the glory of his name.
Adore the Lord in his holy court. (R.)
- The Lord's voice resounding on the waters,
the Lord on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the Lord, full of power,
the voice of the Lord, full of splendour. (R.)
- The God of glory thunders.
In his temple they all cry: "Glory!"
The Lord sat enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits as king for ever. (R.)

SECOND READING Acts 10:34-38

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:
"The truth I have now come to realise," he said "is that God does not have favourites,
but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him.

"It is true, God sent his word to the people of Israel, and it was to them that the good news of peace was brought by Jesus Christ – but Jesus Christ is Lord of all men. You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens opened and the Father's voice resounded:
"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him."
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 3:13-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. "It is I who need baptism from you," he said "and yet you come to me!" But Jesus replied, "Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands." At this, John gave in to him.

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the offerings
we have brought to honour the revealing of your beloved Son,
so that the oblation of your faithful
may be transformed into the sacrifice of him
who willed in his compassion
to wash away the sins of the world.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold the One of whom John said:
I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished with these sacred gifts,
we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord,
that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten Son,
we may be your children in name and in truth.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

