

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) 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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 103)

ANTIPHON: Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

RESPONSE: Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

LECTOR: Lord God, how great you are, clothed in majesty and glory, wrapped in light as in a robe! You stretch out the heavens like a tent. **R.**

LECTOR: Above the rains you build your dwelling. You make the clouds your chariot, you walk on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers and flashing fire your servants. **R.**

LECTOR: How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your riches. There is the sea, vast and wide, with its moving swarms past counting, living things great and small. **R.**

LECTOR: All of these look to you to give them their food in due season. You give it, they gather it up: you open your hand, they have their fill. **R.**

LECTOR: You take back your spirit, they die, returning to the dust from which they came. You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! John said: He who is to come is mightier than I; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7; Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

NEXT WEEK (2nd Sunday of Year C) Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 95; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; John 2:1-11

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*Being zealous
for good deeds*



12 January 2025 Baptism of Our Lord, Year C

After our joyful celebration of the feast of Christmas, followed by the feasts of the Holy Family and, last week, the Epiphany, we come to the end of the Christmas season. We now enter what we call Ordinary Time and, on its first Sunday, we have the Baptism of Our Lord.

Following on from last week's Feast of the Epiphany, the gospel reading for the Baptism of Our Lord offers an even more vivid manifestation, another epiphany, revealing the identity of Jesus: "this is my beloved Son."

In our first reading, the prophet Isaiah consoles the people of Israel, then in exile in the desert, reminding them of God's promises, telling them "prepare the way of the Lord" and assuring them that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed ... the Lord is coming with power."

The Responsorial Psalm then proclaims, "You send forth your spirit ... and you renew the face of the earth."

Today's reading from Luke's gospel shows the realisation of these promises. In preparation for the Lord's coming, John the Baptist had been preaching repentance for sin and a baptism of repentance in the waters of the River Jordan. So powerful was his preaching that many wondered if indeed John was the Christ, the One who was to come.

But John vehemently denied it, insisting that he was not even worthy to touch Christ's sandal, and that, while he baptises with water, the coming one, "someone who is more powerful," will baptise "with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

On the brink of his public ministry, Jesus, about thirty years old, emerges from the crowd and comes to John the Baptist for baptism. John, recognising that Jesus is the One, at first resists Jesus' request, but then agrees and baptises Jesus.

An extraordinary epiphany then follows. While Jesus is at prayer after his baptism by John, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in bodily shape, like a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The dove reminds us of the story of creation when God's spirit was described as hovering over the waters like a dove and of the story of Noah and the flood when the dove proclaimed a new beginning, a new era.

The words of the Father reveal Jesus' unique relationship to the Father, a relationship of sonship: he is the Beloved Son. It is no accident that this Feast of Our Lord's Baptism opens Ordinary Time, because it reminds us of our identity as daughters and sons of God, granted through the grace of our baptism.

Through our baptism, we enter into the family and hospitality of God. Our second reading reminds us that, as members of that family, we are called to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, to give up everything that does not lead to God, and to be a people who are zealous for good deeds.

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