

The Baptism of the Lord

Year B



Modern day image



6th Century mosaic

Our Masses this weekend will use the Gospel from Year B and the other readings from Year A.

The story of the Baptism of Jesus is one of the major events in the life of Jesus, and one which, like the crucifixion, is viewed as an event that has a historical basis as well as a spiritual meaning. The Gospel tells the well-known story of John the Baptist preaching near the Jordan and baptising people. There is evidence that a monastic group called the Essenes used baptism at their monastery at Qumran as a sign of ritual cleansing. The Essenes of Qumran are linked to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Qumran was in the Jordan wilderness, near the area where John was probably preaching. Some people believe that John had connections with the Essenes.

The Gospel tells us that when Jesus came to be baptised by John,
he saw the heavens open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

What a beautiful Trinity moment, showing, once more, the community of love between God the Creator, Jesus the Incarnate God and the Holy Spirit of love. We are also reminded of the angel's words to Mary at the Annunciation, *"Rejoice, so highly favoured. The Lord is with you."*

From the Annunciation, his Birth at Bethlehem, his Life in Nazareth, his Baptism by John, his Public Ministry, his Crucifixion and Resurrection, Jesus found favour with God. As it says in our first reading from the prophet Isaiah:

*"Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights."*

The Baptism of Jesus by John is seen as the beginning of his public ministry; the years that we hear about in the second reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

“God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good.”

We, too, are God’s children. To each of us God says,

“You are my daughter, my son, my beloved; my favour rests on you.”

God’s Love Letter to You

You are my beloved child. Speak to me often. I want to hear your voice. I want you to include me in the things going on in your life.

I want to hear you talk about your friends and family. They are my angels that I have sent into your life. Love them and let them love you with great tenderness and compassion. Prayer is simply you having a conversation with me. I want to be your dearest friend. Let’s talk together.

I am a God of love. Love me. Love your neighbours. But also love yourself. It makes my heart ache when I see you so angry with yourself when things go wrong. You are very precious to me. Don’t ever forget that!

With all my heart I love you,

GOD



When Jesus stepped into the waters of the Jordan and was baptized by John the Baptist, he did so not because he was in need of repentance, or conversion: he did it to be among people who need forgiveness, among us sinners, and to take upon himself the burden of our sins.

— Pope Francis —

Let us always acknowledge that we are God’s children, his Beloved ones. God came in the person of Jesus to be amongst us, to feel our joys and our sorrows and to hold us gently when we need support. Let us pray for all those in our world who need to feel God’s love at this time, especially those in our parish community.