



AMDG
BAPTISM OF THE LORD
YEAR A
12TH JANUARY 2020



**‘This is my Son, the Beloved;
my favour rests on him.’**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, whose Only Begotten Son
has appeared in our very flesh,
grant, we pray, that we may be inwardly transformed
through him whom we recognize as outwardly like ourselves.

With the feast of the Epiphany ending the main season of Christmastide, we come this Sunday to the Baptism of the Lord. Today we consider the adult Jesus, his identity and his mission.

We are encouraged in the *First Reading* to see Jesus in the person of the Servant of God. Isaiah presents him as chosen and beloved; gentle, but filled with the power of the Spirit. He has the authority to bring about justice and righteousness. As ‘covenant of the people’, he will heal and free them.

The *Psalms* tell of the glory and power of God. The thundering storm contrasts with the humble and simple account of Jesus’s baptism.

Peter’s speech to the household of Cornelius in the *Second Reading* also summarizes the mission of Jesus after his baptism. Jesus has a mission to all peoples, because ‘God does not have favourites’.

Matthew’s account of the baptism of Jesus in the *Gospel*, reflecting the previous readings, shows Jesus to be the beloved Son of God, anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit and with power.

We, too, are the beloved children of the Father, and we may pray to follow Jesus his Son more closely this week.

SECOND READING ACTS 10: 34–38

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 Judea; 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.’

I settle to pray by relaxing my body.

I still my mind and become aware of being in God’s presence.

After some time I read the passage slowly, a couple of times.

I may notice how this text reflects both today’s Isaiah reading and the Gospel.

Jesus, on whom God’s favour rests, is the focus and content of Peter’s message – he is the Lord of all men and women of any nationality.

As I ponder these words, I may like to consider the importance and meaning of my own baptism (or perhaps my confirmation).

Jesus’s baptism and his anointing with the Holy Spirit were the affirmation of his mission and public ministry.

I, too, have received these gifts. I speak to the Lord.

How have I opened these gifts?

In what way do I live them out in my prayer, my life, or my actions?

I may ask the Lord to open my heart, to touch me with his Spirit, and show me in what ways he wishes me to follow him.

I remain silent before him, allowing him to touch me as I listen to him.

I gently bring my prayer to a close, thanking the Lord for this time with him, and asking him to be with me throughout my day.

GOSPEL MATTHEW 3: 13–17

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.’

As I come to pray, I take the time to relax into God’s presence and offer him this period of contemplation.

I may imagine the scene: Jesus leaving the quiet of Nazareth to seek out John, who is surrounded by the crowds. I see him, in his humanity, choosing to be with his brothers and sisters.

Perhaps I can turn to the Lord in praise and thanksgiving for taking on human flesh ... taking on our sins and choosing to be among us.

Or I may contemplate the humility of both Jesus and John. How does their exchange reveal this to me?

How is this humility reflected in my own ministry?

I may prefer to pray with the second part of the Gospel – Jesus being baptised. I can apply my senses to see Jesus in the Jordan: to watch the Spirit descending as a dove ... to hear the running water ... to experience its refreshing coolness ... and especially to hear the Father’s voice.

How do I feel? How do I imagine Jesus feels at this confirmation by the Father – of great love for him, of the approval of his actions?

Am I convinced of the Father’s unconditional love for me?

Do I believe that I am a favoured child of God, loved, chosen, sent?

I speak to the Lord of this, or rest quietly in his love and the gentle presence of his Spirit.

I end my prayer with a slow ‘*Glory be ...*’

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

Here is my servant whom I uphold.

First Reading

The Lord's voice resounding on the waters,
the Lord on the immensity of waters.

Psalm

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.

Second Reading

'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.' *Gospel*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7; Psalm 28 (29); Acts 10: 34-38; Matthew 3: 13-17



The Spirit of God
descended
like a dove.



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