

# Baptism of the Lord C

*Your only Son revealed himself to us by becoming man. May we who share his humanity come to share his divinity. (Opening Prayer)*



## First Reading

*Isaiah 42:1-4.6-7*

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 nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free the captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

## 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 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."

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

## Meditation

*The annual season of light draws to a close. January may be quite bleak in northern climates, but the solstice has passed. Light has won out over darkness and we have celebrated the bright hope of salvation. We have ritualised once more the cherished customs of Christmas.*

*Families, stores, and communities regularly package their Christmas decor and store it away for eleven months. For the Church, our season of birth and manifestation is not packed up and stored. The feast of the Baptism of the Lord does not tie up all the loose ends of the plot or neatly summarize the mystery. It remembers one more aspect of Christmas, but it also sets the stage for the week-by-week unfolding of the mystery of Jesus through the recounting of each synoptic gospel.*

*The evangelists present the baptism of Jesus at the start of his public life because the varied details of their accounts unveil his identity. Like the servant praised in Isaiah, Jesus has come to do God's will. He is consecrated in the Spirit. He is the beloved Son.*

*These proclamations about Jesus summon us to fuller awareness of the paschal mystery. Through baptism we are the body of Christ, facing the same mystery of dying and rising. We too must be open to the Spirit, conscious of our relationship to God. Thus we can live a life of discipleship and begin to understand the true meaning of history.*

*From his fullness we have all received everything that we need so that we are able to reveal to the world the Word that brings life. This is Christmas.*

# Baptism of the Lord C

*Your only Son revealed himself to us by becoming man. May we who share his humanity come to share his divinity. (Opening Prayer)*



## First Reading

*Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11*

"Console my people, console them" says your God. "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes."

A voice cries, "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God." Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

## Second Reading

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

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

When the kindness and love of God our Saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, "I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

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