

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

The Baptism of the Lord, C
January 9, 2022

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

Entrance Hymn: — 336

Joy to the World

Offertory Hymn: — 615

Abba, Father

Recessional Hymn: — 336

Joy to the World

SATURDAYS:

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Holy Hour
3:45 pm to 4:15 pm – Confessions
4:30 pm – HOLY MASS

SUNDAYS:

7:15 am to 8:15 am – Holy Hour
7:45 am to 8:15 am – Confessions
8:30 am – HOLY MASS

Introduction to the Liturgy of the Day

Today we stand on the threshold between two seasons of the Church year.

We conclude our Christmas season with today's Feast of the Lord's baptism, but we also mark the First Sunday of Ordinary Time. Perhaps this symbolism is meant to remind us that we are called to look outward, that because of our Baptism it is not enough just to bask in the Christmas glow; we must bring Christ to the rest of the world.

Let us pray today for the grace to do what God asks of us.



The Baptism of Jesus was the inauguration of his public ministry. The Holy Spirit descended upon him and directed him throughout his ministry.

In the same way, for us, Christians, to enter into Ordinary Time means to live our day-to-day-life under the direction or guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us be nourished regularly by our Lord who comes to us as the Bread of Life and the Word of Life.

May our encounter with him in the liturgy not end with mere knowledge or performance of a ritual but with our constant openness to Him as the ONE WHO LIVES IN US.

Universal Prayers

CELEBRANT: We have been baptized in water and the Spirit. As sons and daughters of God, then, let us bring to God our prayers for the needs of the world.

LECTOR:

For all of us, the Church, that we may realize the call we received in baptism and may, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, bring light to all who dwell in darkness in every nation, in every age, let us pray to the Lord.

For leaders of countries around the world, that they may strive to do what is right and just in their lands, let us pray to the Lord.

For all who prepare adults for initiation or parents whose children will be baptized, that they may be blessed in their ministry, let us pray to the Lord.

For college students as they return to their studies: May their work bear fruit for the future of the world, let us pray to the Lord.

For those whose lives have been adversely affected by those who call themselves Christians but do not act as followers of Christ and for those who struggle to understand the interface between the Gospel and complex social issues or politics, let us pray to the Lord.

For all Christians, as we begin the week of prayer for Christian unity later this week: May we acknowledge our common baptism and find ways to work together as one body of Christ, Let us pray to the Lord

CELEBRANT: Merciful God, please hear these prayers we offer today through your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

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The Mystery of Faith:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.

THE READINGS. . . SOME REFLECTIONS. . . AND GUIDEPOSTS.

Introduction to the Liturgy of the Word

Today's readings are a mini-excursion through Advent and Christmas, depositing us on the threshold of Ordinary Time.

The reading from Isaiah recalls the Advent message of comfort and hope. Saint Paul proclaims that the grace of God has appeared. In the Gospel we have an adult Jesus being baptized by John, ready for his mission and affirmed by the voice of God.

As we listen to these words of scripture, let us recall our own Baptism and prepare for whatever God will ask us to do next.

1st Reading – Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

¹Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! ⁴Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. ⁹Go up on to a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah:

Here is your God! ¹⁰Here comes with power the Lord GOD, who rules by a strong arm; here is his reward with him, his recompense before him. ¹¹Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care.

The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 104:1b-2, 3-4, 24-25, 27-28, 29-30)

“O bless the Lord, my soul.”

O LORD, my God, you are great indeed! you are clothed with majesty and glory, robed in light as with a cloak. You have spread out the heavens like a tent-cloth;

R.

You have constructed your palace upon the waters. You make the clouds your chariot; you travel on the wings of the wind. You make the winds your messengers, and flaming fire your ministers.

R.

How manifold are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you have wrought them all—the earth is full of your creatures;

the sea also, great and wide, in which are schools without number of living things both small and great.

R.

They look to you to give them food in due time. When you give it to them, they gather it; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

R.

If you take away their breath, they perish and return to the dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

R.

2nd Reading – Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Beloved: ¹¹The grace of God has appeared, saving all ¹²and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, ¹³as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good.

⁴When the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, ⁵not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, ⁷so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia – (Luke 3:16)

Lector: Alleluia, alleluia. **All:** Alleluia, alleluia.

Lector: ¹⁶John said: One mightier than I is coming; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

¹⁵The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. ¹⁶John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

²¹After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

It needs to be pointed out that Jesus did not need the baptism of John. John was baptizing as a call to and sign of interior repentance. Jesus did not have sin to repent of, so John's baptism had no relevance in this regard. But, nevertheless, Jesus comes to John for baptism.



WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED?

Because through the Baptism, God himself announces Jesus' Divinity.

One approach to understanding Jesus' baptism is to see it as a clarification of who Jesus is. He is God's Son, his beloved, with whom the Father is well pleased. There would be no question about Jesus' identity.

Jesus' identity had already been revealed to us in Luke's gospel when the angel told Mary at the annunciation that she would conceive her child through the power of the Holy Spirit and he would be holy and would be called Son of God.

Jesus' identity was also revealed when Jesus was lost in the temple for three days and when he was found he said to his parents "why were you looking for me? Didn't you know I must be in my Father's house?"

But his identity was hidden from everyone around them. It was only when Jesus was baptized and God announced to the world "This is my beloved Son" and the Spirit came down upon him that the world was to know who he was.

Because through his Baptism, Jesus shows his solidarity with sinners.

This is the other answer to the question: Why did Jesus need to be baptized? When John the Baptist asks this question, Jesus responds by saying, "To fulfill all righteousness." Scholars interpret this remark as showing Jesus' solidarity with sinners, those for whom he had been sent, even though he himself did not sin.

May we see Jesus revealed today in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in each other so that, as we return to Ordinary Time, we live as Christians -- baptized with the Holy Spirit and empowered to carry on Jesus' mission, we put our faith into action. May God be well pleased.

Looking at the question "Why did Jesus have to be baptized?" through the eyes of a person living in the first century Palestine.

Yes, let us look at this question through the eyes of a person living in first century Palestine.

Why would Jesus seek to be baptized by John, despite his awareness that he had lived a righteous life as a pious Jew?

The first thing we need to do is lay aside a principle that our modern society holds dear. This is the principle that we are only responsible for our own actions. If another member of our community or family does something wrong, we should not be punished for it. Only the guilty person or persons are liable.

People living in the time of Jesus did not see things in the same way. For them, when a member of one's extended family or community did something wrong, the whole group accepted it as a dishonor in which they shared. They may have dealt with the individual or individuals who brought dishonor to them, but they also knew that reparation needed to be made for the whole community.

Jesus, as a member of his culture, felt the shame of his people's historic failure to live up to the covenant they made with God.

With this in mind we can see Jesus' motivation for seeking out John the Baptist along the Jordan. He knew himself to be his people's messiah and as such he represented them as a whole.

Jesus' baptism by John was a baptism of repentance for all the Jewish people living and deceased. Just as Jesus' passion and death were for the salvation of all men and women through the ages, so too was Jesus' baptism.

Here is found the basis also of why the Church encourages us to join at least twice a year (at Advent and at Lent) a communal penance service.

Maybe we who are living in this highly individualized culture can learn something from this. We, like Jesus, can take responsibility for some of the wrongs in our communities even though we ourselves are not personally to blame. In doing so we can participate in Christ's mission of reconciliation and setting to right the wrongs that can be so easily ignored.



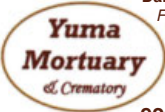
—A priest, a minister and a rabbi are discussing when life begins. The *priest* says, "It begins at conception". The *minister* says, "Life begins at 24 weeks gestation". The *rabbi* says, "You are both wrong, Life begins when the kids move out of the house and the dog dies."

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