

Suggested Opening Song: Holy God, We Praise Thy Name, #255

On this final day of the Christmas season we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. We hear in dramatic fashion of Jesus rising from the waters of the River Jordan, the heavens opening before him, the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, and a voice from the heavens proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Though not as visibly, we too have risen from the waters of baptism and received the Holy Spirit. As beloved children of God, we pray that God is also well pleased with us.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 144

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Introductory Rite:

Greeting:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 12

Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Opening Prayer:

Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word:First Reading p. 84

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Thus says the LORD: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. a bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 29: 1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

R/. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

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Give to the LORD, you sons of God, give to the LORD glory and praise,
Give to the LORD the glory due his name; adore the LORD in holy attire. **R/.**

The voice of the LORD is over the waters, the LORD, over vast waters.
The voice of the LORD is mighty; the voice of the LORD is majestic. **R/.**

The God of glory thunders, and in his temple all say, "Glory!"
The LORD is enthroned above the flood; the LORD is enthroned as king forever. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 10:34-38

Peter proceeded to speak to those gathered in the house of Cornelius, saying: "In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him. You know the word that he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 3:13-17

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection on the Word:

- “Here is my servant,” the LORD says through Isaiah of a chosen one, a Messiah, a Christ, who would bring justice and healing to the nations (Isaiah 42:1). Isaiah writes again and again in these chapters of the Messiah as a servant, someone who would act at God’s behest in the world. In this way, Isaiah foresees the character of the Messiah. The Messiah would serve God’s will. Therefore, when Jesus insists on John baptizing him, he says it is “to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Righteousness is moral conduct in accordance with God’s will. Jesus was sent by the Father to save humankind. This is the service he was called to do and, in turn, the service Jesus now calls us to do.
- How do we do it? Jesus can be our model. Isaiah put it well when he wrote that the Messiah would bring justice, but not by shouting or violence, for he would not injure a bruised reed or extinguish a barely flickering flame. Jesus comes with tenderness and compassion. Moreover, he sticks to these ideals even when arousing the ire of the authorities (think of him forgiving the woman accused of adultery or healing the disabled man on the sabbath). This is the example he left us to follow.
- One more aspect of this tender loving care is asserted by Peter in the second reading: “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10:34). This allowed Peter to enter the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, without considering himself to be unclean. Moreover, Peter realized that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on those gathered there and so these Gentiles should be baptized and welcomed into the flock. He recalled that John the Baptist preached that Jesus would baptize not with water, but with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, poured out on us in baptism, now guides us as we live a Christian life. As we pursue justice tenderly and lovingly, we are called to not discriminate among those in need.

Question of the Week

This coming week, in what way can I be a servant of the Lord with tenderness and compassion?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Baptized in Christ, God’s beloved Son, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

- For the Church, that we may be faithful to the mission that we were called to in baptism, joining in Jesus’ saving work of spreading the gospel and doing good, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For government leaders, that they may protect and preserve the earth’s precious resource of clean water and share it equitably with those in need worldwide, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For young people, that they may honestly discern if God is calling them to service beyond their baptismal call to the priesthood or religious life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all those who must endure brutal winter weather for long periods of time: those who are homeless, those without heat, and those who must work outdoors, that they may be kept safe this winter, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For catechists who prepare adults, teens, and parents of babies and young children for baptism, that they may be blessed in their work, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Holy God, your voice was heard from the heavens when John baptized your Son to tell the world you were well pleased. May the prayers we make be pleasing to you. Grant them according to your will through the one whose birth we celebrate this season, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 180

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Rite of Peace:

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord, that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten Son, we may be your children in name and in truth.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Concluding Rite:

Final Blessing:

May the Lord bless us, ☩ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: The Servant Song, #224