

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD



Make us Holy

Loving Father,
you sent the gift of the Spirit
upon your beloved Son
on the banks of the Jordan
long ago.
And upon each of us,
the Spirit called upon the waters,
making them holy.
Strengthen us in that same Spirit,
make us holy, set us apart,
that we answer your call.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

January 9, 2022

In You I Am Well Pleased



Today's readings: Isaiah 42, 1–4 or Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 29:1–2, 3–4, 3, 9–10 or Psalm 104:1b–2, 3–4, 24–25, 27–28, 29–20; Acts 10:34–38 or Titus 2:11–14, 3:4–7; Luke 3:15–16, 21–22. John the Baptist pointed away from himself and toward Jesus. He spoke God's Word to the people and baptized those who came to him, but he knew that he was not the messiah, the one who will baptize "with the holy Spirit and fire." And then one day, Jesus came to him to be baptized.

The heavens opened and the Spirit came down in the form of a dove. "You are my Beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit descended bodily, making

Jesus ready for his public ministry. What joy John must have felt to see the fulfillment of God's promises to him and to the people of Israel! It was the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, in which he preached the kingdom of God but also revealed it in everything that he did.

On the day of our baptism, we receive the same Holy Spirit that descended on Jesus two thousand years ago. It is the beginning of our own vocation to reveal the kingdom of God in our words and our actions: to be like Jesus. How is God calling you today? You are God's beloved child, in whom God is well pleased. How will you carry the joy of that revelation into your life beyond the Christmas season?



THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

January 10—March 1 Ordinary Time

The word *ordinary* can feel like a synonym for “boring,” but Ordinary Time is far from it. This season takes its name from the ordinal numbers (first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and so on) that are used to count the Sundays and the weeks that follow them. While the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter have a certain importance in the liturgical year, that does not diminish Ordinary Time. Consider that as the priest prepares the paschal candle at the Easter Vigil, he states, “All time belongs to him.” How might you use this season to grow closer to God?

January 18–25 Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity spans an octave, or eight-day observance, a time frame that lends significance to the week. It is a great sorrow to be separated from our brothers and sisters in Christ, unable to join around the Eucharistic table together to “do this in memory of me.” We wait in hope in a special way during this week for the day when all divisions among Christians will cease.

January 25 Conversion of St. Paul

This feast commemorates the day when Saul, an observant young Jewish man who opposed the early Christians and even participated in the stoning death of St. Stephen, had an encounter with the risen Jesus. Saul, also known as Paul, left behind his former life to become an apostle to the gentiles. To preach the Gospel, you might offer forgiveness and mercy to someone who is not sorry, serve a meal at a soup kitchen with a joyful heart, or drop off a box of diapers at a place that serves mothers and children. *Today’s readings: Acts 22: 3–6 or Acts 9:1–22; Psalm 117:1bc, 2; Mark 16:15–18.*

January 28 St. Thomas Aquinas

Known as the angelic doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican priest whose writings are essential to the way we understand what we believe. He was a great theologian and philosopher, engaging with the intellectual currents of his day as well as those of ancient philosophy. St. Thomas described the beatific vision, unending happiness and union with God, as the goal of human life. *Today’s readings: 2 Samuel 11:1–4a, 5–10a, 13–17; Psalm 51: 3–4, 5–6a, 6bcd–7, 10–11; Mark 4:26–34.*

January 31 St. John Bosco

St. John Bosco was an Italian priest who worked to improve the lives of young people who lived in poverty. He went into the world to encounter the young people who had traveled to the city to try to find a better life but were living in abject poverty and unsafe conditions. He began many initiatives and organizations to assist children and was the founder of a religious congregation. *Today’s readings: 2 Samuel 15:13–14, 30, 16:5–13; Psalm 3:2–3, 4–5, 6–7; Mark 5:1–20.*

February 2 The Presentation of the Lord

This feast, forty days after Christmas, is traditionally a time to bring candles to church to be blessed. In Luke’s account of the Gospel, we hear Simeon proclaim Jesus “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel.” The Gospel according to John is also a source of the imagery of light associated with Jesus. Anna and Simeon watched and waited for the light throughout their lives. At times, it can be difficult to wait for what we most hope for. Watching and waiting for the light, we can unite ourselves with the waiting of Anna and Simeon. What desires of your heart are you still waiting to have fulfilled? You might decorate a tealight holder and light the candle to remind you to wait in hope. *Today’s readings: Malachi 3:1–4, Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2: 22–40.*

