



# City Pastoral REGION

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

**Inner Newcastle Parish:** Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newcastle West; St Joseph's Church, The Junction; St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, Newcastle; Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Tighes Hill; St Laurence O'Toole Church, Broadmeadow. **Mayfield Parish:** Christ the King, Mayfield West. **Stockton Parish:** St Peter-in-Chains, Stockton.

## SUNDAY 9 JANUARY 2022

### FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, YEAR C

#### Our Clergy

Fr Andrew Doohan  
Fr Peter Thoai  
Fr Matthew Muller  
Fr John Vo  
Deacon Lawrence Caelli

#### Regional Office—St Benedict's Centre

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#### Our Staff

Margaret Cox (*Reception & Administration*)  
Maryanne Hewitt (*Reception & Administration*)  
Anne Warren (*Business Manager Finance*)  
Jade Simonsen (*Business Manager Property*)  
Dr Anne Millard (*Music, Liturgy, Sacraments, Bulletin*)

#### Other Contacts

**Lingard Hospital Team:** Contact the Parish Office

**Mercy Pastoral Team:** Sr Patricia Whitten rsm  
(02) 4979 1116

**St Joseph's Pastoral Team:** Contact the Parish Office

**Parish Bulletin:** Prayer requests and items for the Bulletin should be received at the Parish Office by 5pm on Wednesdays.



The Baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of his ministry. The story describes a very tangible and textured encounter with God in terms accessible to human imagination. At the same time, the events draw human thinking, feeling and sensing to unfamiliar and mysterious levels of experience. A captivating theophany is depicted: the heavens are torn apart, the Spirit appears and descends like a dove on Jesus and the voice of God affirms that Jesus is the chosen one, the 'Beloved'. There is unmistakable tenderness here.

Art and reflection by Jenny Close

*Our Parishes incorporate suburbs located on the traditional country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing relationship with the land, pay respect to their Elders past and present, and commit ourselves to work together for reconciliation and justice.*

## THE PARISH DIARY...(for the week ahead)

*First Week in Ordinary Time, Year C*

Monday—10th January

Feast of St John

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Tuesday—11th January

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

Wednesday—12th January

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

9:00am Mass @ Mayfield West

9:15am Mass @ Tighes Hill

Thursday—13th January

*Memorial of St Hilary*

8:15am Mass @ The Cathedral

8:30am Mass @ Stockton—CANCELLED

Friday—14th January

10:15am Mass @ The Junction

11:00am Exposition, Adoration & Reconciliation @  
The Cathedral (until 12pm)

12:05pm Mass @ The Cathedral

Saturday—15th January

9:15am Mass @ The Cathedral, followed by the  
Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
(followed by Reconciliation)

5:30pm Mass @ The Cathedral

5:30pm Mass @ The Junction

6:00pm Mass @ Mayfield West

Sunday—16th January

*2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

7.30am Mass @ St Mary's

8:00am Mass @ Tighes Hill

9:00am Mass @ The Junction

9:00am Mass @ Stockton

9:30am Mass @ The Cathedral \*

11:00am Mass @ The Junction (*Italian*)

11:30am Mass @ The Cathedral (*Polish*)

5:00pm Mass @ The Cathedral

6:00pm Mass @ Mayfield West (*Vietnamese*)

\* *Livestreamed on the Cathedral's YouTube channel—  
[www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartCathedralHamilton](http://www.youtube.com/c/SacredHeartCathedralHamilton)*

## NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

*2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

Is 62:1-5: Zion shall be vindicated.

1 Cor 12:4-11: To each is given different gifts.

Jn 2:1-11: The Wedding at Cana

Weekday and Sunday readings  
can be found at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

## DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

Devotions to Divine Mercy will take place on the first Sunday of each month at 3pm in Christ the King Church, Mayfield West. All welcome.

## BOOK CLUB

**Sunday, 6th February @ 6pm** to discuss  
*Wild Abandon* by Emily Bitto. If you would  
like to participate in book club meetings,  
please email  
[newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au)



## VIEW, CHEW, CHAT, AND LECTIO

View, Chew, and Chat resumes in February.  
To participate, please email the Parish Office.

## ENROLMENTS FOR 2022 SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

A child's catholic faith journey began with the Sacrament of Baptism and continues by the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

The preparations for these sacraments in the Inner Newcastle Parish run between February and June of every year and is designed for children going into Year, 4, 5 or 6 in 2022. Preparations are done as a family with online activities and volunteer work within the community.

Enrolments are now open for the 2022 program. If you are interested in being apart of the program next year please visit the parish website and complete the online enrolment form.

<https://www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/sacramental-enrolment-form/>

For more information please contact the office on 49791101 or [newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au](mailto:newcparish@mn.catholic.org.au)

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**RECENTLY DECEASED:** Philippa Whalley,  
Jeff Buckby, Maree Rufo, Elvira Abel, Sr  
Judith Fitzhardinge



**ANNIVERSARIES:** Maisie Margaret Owens,  
Robert Allan, Edward McCormack

**SICK:** Maree Halbert, Betty Stott, Carlo Rossi, Kath Murray, Veronica McCann, Wayne Bishop, Peter Skinner, Carmel Blair, Peter Keddie, Tomislav Kefecsek

*Names may be placed here by contacting the Parish Office. Please refer to the Policy Document on the Parish website—visit [www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads](http://www.newcastlecatholic.org.au/downloads).*

## REFLECTION

by Richard Leonard

These days there are some young Catholic parents who wonder whether baptism is the proper thing for them to seek for their children. One argument they sometimes offer is that it would be better to defer baptism until their child reaches adulthood and then he or she has the opportunity to choose it. As appealing as this argument might seem on the surface, the problem is that the reasoning behind it is so inconsistently applied.

Young Catholic parents do not give their children any choice about eating vegetables, learning to read or write and living out a moral code. They enforce these things because they know that nutrition, literacy and ethics are essential for adulthood. If we recognise that, from birth, a child has spiritual as well as educational, moral and physical needs, it strikes me as inconsistent to relegate this constitutively otherworldly element of a child's character to a 'must be decided on later' category.

Baptism is not brainwashing. Adults can come and go from the practise of their faith as they feel drawn. Sadly for us, they can even choose against belief. To grow up, however, with no religious foundation or no basis on which to make spiritual choices seems to limit freedom rather than promote it. In our culture baptism of infants by their parents is an entirely proper thing to do.

In today's Gospel we hear that Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan because it was 'the proper thing to do'.

This can seem all quaintly odd to us today because we seem to accept that our only convention is to flout convention. The done thing today is to undo what we've done before.

We hold very strongly, however, to the idea that God always does the 'proper thing'. It's called 'appropriateness' in theology. We believe, for example, that God decided it was proper to become incarnate when he did, how he did and where he did. Over the centuries there's been endless debate about what would've happened if the Word had come to us as a woman, in another era, on another continent. While these are interesting enough matters on which to speculate, they are not what God thought proper – or what, in fact, happened.

In line with the right action of God, Jesus does the proper thing in being baptised by John's baptism of repentance, even though he had nothing of which to repent. Jesus is not simply baptised, however, simply

because it was expected of him, just a fulfilment of his duty. Jesus' experience of baptism starts with John's baptism as an admission of guilt and then reveals that baptism is primarily about the Father's love. To this day our baptismal ritual holds these two realities in a healthy tension. When we are baptised in Christ, we acknowledge both Original Sin and Original Grace. God's love comes alive in us even though we are aware of how far from that love we stray.

The Baptism of Jesus and every baptism done in his name ever since, is the moment when we hold together the greatness of God's love, that calls each of us by name to be his son or daughter, with the reality of our human frailty. What more appropriate way of welcoming anyone into the world than having a community of frail, human believers initiate its members by reminding them that Original Sin does not have the last word. For those of us baptised in Christ, the Father's love always and everywhere has the final, appropriate say on every matter.

May this Eucharist make us worthy of the love lavished on us in baptism and give us the courage to keep doing the appropriate things for the coming generations.

© Richard Leonard SJ

**Richard Leonard SJ** is the Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film and Broadcasting, is a member of the Australian Catholic Media Council and a film critic for all the major Australian Catholic newspapers. He completed a PhD in cinema studies at the University of Melbourne. He lectures in cinema and theology at the Jesuit College of Spirituality and has been a visiting lecturer in Australian cinema at the University of Melbourne, a visiting scholar within the School of Theatre, Film and Television at UCLA and is visiting professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Catholic University, has lectured widely and is the author of numerous books.



## NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

by Mary Coloe PBVM

The Epistle to Titus and the two epistles of Timothy are known as the Pastoral Epistles since they deal with practical living of Christian lives. While seeming to be written by Paul, most scholars consider that these letters come later, somewhere between 70CE and 100CE and thus address the needs of later generations of Christians trying to live at peace within the wider Greco-Roman world. So the advice in today's letter is to 'be self-restrained and live good and religious lives'. By living such good lives, the Christian community is a witness to their faith in the blessings now bestowed by the crucified and risen Christ. The free and gracious love of God is emphasised as the motivation for God's action in Jesus. God is described as kind, loving, compassionate and generous. It is unfortunate that many still retain older images of God as a harsh, calculating judge and today's reading provides an opportunity to refute such images. Obviously, the religious experience of the community behind this letter was the God experienced by Jesus as 'Abba'.

Jesus' first 'Abba' experience is described in the scene of his Baptism. The three synoptic Gospels record this scene of Jesus' baptism by John, and all try to convey the deeply interior spiritual experience of Jesus. Historically, Jesus came from Nazareth to John, and the Gospel of John suggests that Jesus spent some time as a disciple of John before beginning his own ministry. A glance at the other three Gospels' presentation of this scene can help to identify some unique features of Luke's gospel, and therefore indicate the particular theological perspective of Luke.

Mark presents the experience as something totally private to Jesus. He is the only one to see the heavens part, and to hear the heavenly voice. Matthew and Luke bring elements of a private and public manifestation of God. Luke records, 'heaven was opened'. The use of the passive voice is a technique known as 'the Divine Passive' to indicate that this was the action of God. Since Luke omits the words from Mark that *Jesus saw* the heavens opened, Luke suggests that this was a public revelation. Then Luke follows Mark in having the heavenly voice speak directly to Jesus, 'You are my Son.' This suggests a private experience.

Some other elements in Luke's presentation need to be noted. Only Luke records that Jesus 'was at prayer'. Prayer will emerge as a theme of this Gospel and frequently Luke presents Jesus withdrawing from his ministry in order to spend time in prayer, or teaching his disciples to pray. (Luke 5:16, 33; 6:12, 28; 9:28;

11:1, 2; 18:1, 10; 22:40, 46) This same theme continues in Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles.

In Mark and Matthew, we are told that Jesus came *out of the water* and then the heavens opened and the Spirit came down on him. Luke omits this detail and so Jesus is standing in the water when the Spirit descends. This deliberate change to Mark indicates Luke's presentation of Jesus' baptism as a new creation. In Genesis 1:3, we read that the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters. This same Spirit now hovers over the waters of Jesus' Baptism. This marks the dawn of a new era in Luke's theology. In Luke 16:16 we read, 'The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached.' Across Luke's two-volume work, there is a particular time schema:

The time of Israel (the Law and the Prophets)  
The time of Jesus and the Kingdom (The Gospel)  
The time of the Church (the Acts of the Apostles)

Each of these eras begins with the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. The one Spirit provides continuity between the time of Israel, seen in such characters as Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, the time of Jesus, and the time of the Church.

I consider the scene of Jesus' baptism as his vocational call. From this moment, his life changes dramatically and he begins a public ministry to proclaim the in-breaking of God. This, in fact, is his experience here. He knows God as Abba, and knows himself as beloved son. From this spiritual insight, Jesus shifts his perception of God as one who reaches out with kindness and compassion to those in need, particularly the most vulnerable. It is false to imagine that Jesus comes to us with full knowledge of his calling, as if he has somewhere a heavenly diary to consult telling him all he needs to know and do. Jesus is fully human and fully divine, and to be fully human means being open to the mysterious call of God and needing to carefully ponder this mystery and work out the details in solitude and prayer.

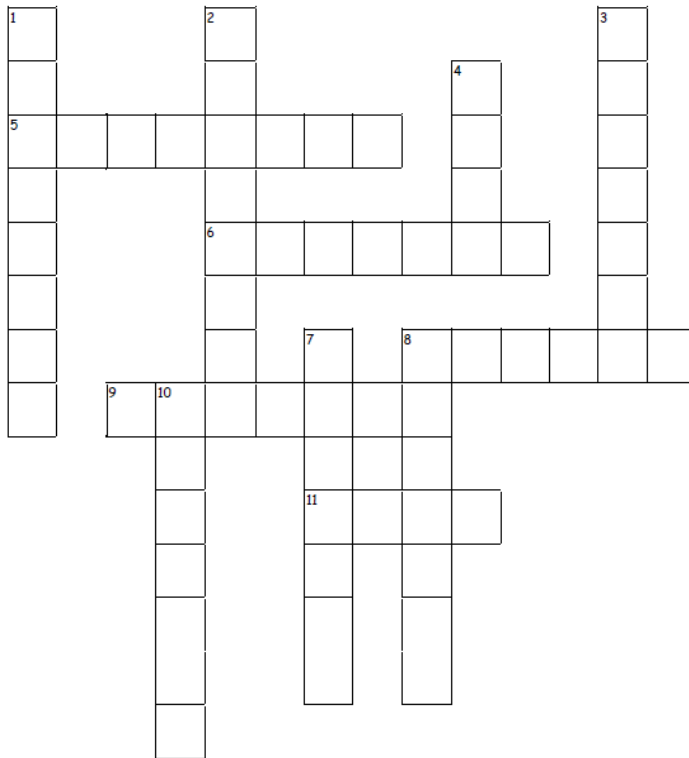
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## CROSSWORD

# God will bring justice to all the earth

Is 42:1-2, 4, 6-7  
Ps 29:3abde-4, 3cde & 9ef-10. R.v.11b  
Acts 10:34-38  
Lk 3:15-16, 21-22



### Across

- 5: strong and mighty
- 6: making something better, curing
- 8: the opposite of weak
- 9: a communication or instruction given to a messenger
- 11: the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus in this form

### Down

- 1: to become one of God's people
- 2: praises and gives thanks to God
- 3: from another place
- 4: the cousin of Jesus who baptised people with water
- 7: footwear commonly worn in biblical times
- 8: someone who serves another
- 10: extremely happy

## JUNIOR WORDSEARCH

# Here I am Lord

1 Sm 3:4-10, 19  
Ps 40:1 & 3ab, 8 & 11. R. 8a & 9a  
Jn 1:35-42

Z L Y R A B B I F Q W L D Y C  
H P M A S Y X S F O X O M Z Q  
K Z Y P C G E R E G G R B R C  
N X A F T E R N O O N D H R Y  
T S N D S V B Y H U Z E I H K  
V S R L T J Y C E L I L I F J  
C H R I S T N E X O H E R Q E  
K W J Q F B R Y B R D F N V N  
M E S S I A H L R B E D G N A  
A T F M B M Y E O P E T E R M  
S A M U E L V G T R F J O C E  
H P J U Z V C H H D O L Q V H  
A L H W T Q Q K E X K M J L Y  
X A A F B T U Y R M K Y V L M  
J S A S E R V A N T R M M Y F

Try to find these words:

afternoon  
bed  
brother  
Christ  
Eli  
Lord  
Messiah  
name  
Peter  
Rabbi  
Samuel  
servant

## WE ARE PUBLIC PEOPLE

Paige Byrne Shortal

*[Jesus] was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water ... a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11)*

On the day he was baptized, Jesus went down into that muddy Jordan River a private person. He came up out of the water ready to begin his life of ministry. He came up a public person.

When we think of public people, we might first think of folks who are on television or whose names are in the headlines — leaders of nations, CEOs, actors, sports heroes, TV personalities; or too often, those accused of crimes and other notorious figures. On a local level, maybe we think of the mayor, business leaders, perhaps pastors and principals, teachers and coaches.

Part of what goes with being a public person is accountability and, in many cases, leadership, whether elected, appointed, ordained or otherwise recognized. And sometimes leadership, like notoriety, is transitory; it's just taking responsibility when one sees a task that needs doing, a niche that needs filling.

But notice — and this is important, I think — the event that marked the beginning of Jesus' public life was baptism.

We baptized are public people. We baptized are acknowledged members of a community, and we are called to play our part, to take responsibility for the good of all. We cannot point our fingers and whine and complain and accuse "them." There is no "them" among the baptized, only "us" and "we." And together we are called to take responsibility for the work of the community and for each other, even and especially for our leaders. Leaders are like the point in a flying flock of geese. To bear the headwind, they must have the support of the flock. And sometimes they must exchange positions, resting for a while on the efforts of others.

It seems that we are experiencing a crisis of leadership. It is nearly impossible for anyone with "a past" to run for public office. The degree of scrutiny exposes peccadilloes, but doesn't allow for lessons learned, for conversion. In our schools there are fewer teachers who want to assume the responsibilities of a principal because no one wants to be the target of every unhappy parent or teacher. And in our church, there seems not to be enough people who are willing to serve as pastors.

When there is a crisis of leadership, perhaps we

need to look at what we are asking of our leaders. We demand of them something that we do not demand of ourselves — a greater degree of morality, transparency, even nobility. But do we demand too much while supporting too little?

And are we recognizing those called to leadership, a call manifested by their God-given skills and passions? Sometimes leaders are recognized by the people who know and willingly follow them, but not by the organization they serve. Consider an "outsider" who has risen through the ranks of a family business, but can go no further because he is not family. Or consider the talent and dedication of some members of the church who cannot assume a leadership position for whatever reason.

All leadership is service and service requires humility. To serve the people of God as Christ served, to be a servant leader, we must have a degree of humility that demands discipline and self-sacrifice. As one bishop preached at the installation of a pastor, leaders must be willing to die for their people. Few are required to die a physical death, but to be effective, each leader, indeed each public person, is required to die to self. And this is what baptism is — the entrance into a community of faith with the promise to act and speak as the Christ within demands.

## GOSPEL FOCUS

### My Son, the Beloved

'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.' This declaration by the voice from Heaven – the voice of God – is an amalgamation of two earlier pieces of scripture: 'You are my son; today I have begotten you' (Ps 2:7) and 'Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights' (Is 42:1). The fact that it is uttered before Jesus has begun his ministry is a sign to all of us that God delights in us for who we are, not for what we have achieved in our lives.



## WHY ARE THERE STILL CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS ?

In the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, the Baptism of the Lord has been celebrated on a separate feast for many centuries. Originally it was the primary mystery celebrated on January 6 (Feast of Epiphany), but over time it was separated and assigned a different day.

In 1955 it was assigned the octave day of Epiphany, January 13, but soon after the Second Vatican Council was moved to the Sunday after Epiphany.

In this context it has always been a “Christmas” feast, celebrated within the Christmas cycle. However, it may seem a little strange to still have the baby Jesus in the manger and celebrate a moment during his adult life.

Yet, it is entirely fitting when reflecting on the central mystery being commemorated.

Both the feast of the Nativity and Baptism of the Lord highlight the humility of Jesus Christ. In both instances Jesus clearly displayed his desire to become one with us, so that he can raise us up with him.

Pope Benedict XVI explains this eloquently in his homily on the Baptism of the Lord in 2013.

*Jesus shows his solidarity with us, with our efforts to convert and to be rid of our selfishness, to break away from our sins in order to tell us that if we accept him in our life he can uplift us and lead us to the heights of God the Father. And Jesus’ solidarity is not, as it were, a mere exercise of mind and will. Jesus truly immersed himself in our human condition, lived it to the end, in all things save sin, and was able to understand our weakness and frailty. For this reason he was moved to compassion, he chose to “suffer with” men and women, to become a penitent with us. This is God’s work which Jesus wanted to carry out: the divine mission to heal those who are wounded and give medicine to the sick, to take upon himself the sin of the world.*

Jesus not only assumed our flesh at the Nativity, but became like us in all things except sin. He even was baptized by his cousin St. John the Baptist, even though he had no need for baptism.

The incarnation of Jesus is a marvelous mystery, one that reminds us of the love God has for humanity. St. Paul summarized it best in his letter to the Philippians.

*Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8) (from aleteia.org)*

## TRINITY

The baptism event in the gospels is a moment of revelation of the Trinitarian nature of God. The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove whilst the voice of God is heard to declare of Jesus, ‘You are my Son.’ It is a unique moment in the scriptures where the three persons of God are individually and collectively revealed. Although the scriptures do not explicitly name God as Trinity, by the time of Paul’s early writings, blessings in the name of Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit are frequent. Despite this, Trinity continues to be a difficult concept for many Christians.



## "AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR" 19 MARCH 2021- 26 JUNE 2022

The “Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love) Family Year” is an initiative of Pope Francis, which aims to reach every family around the world through several spiritual, pastoral and cultural proposals that can be implemented within parishes, dioceses, universities, ecclesial movements and family associations.

Over the course of ten monthly episodes, hear the Holy Father talk about each of the chapters of the Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia, along with the testimonies of different families who will share some aspects of their daily lives.

This initiative is a joint collaboration between the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and Vatican News, and aims to facilitate the reading of the Apostolic Exhortation, with the aid of downloadable material prepared for personal and community reflection.

To access this resource: <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/amoris-laetitia/iniziativa-e-risorse/10-video-amoris-laetitia.html>

## TODAY'S LITURGY

### Entrance Antiphon

After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

### First Reading      Is 40:1-5. 9-11

*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it.*

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 103:1-2. 3-4. 24-25. 27-30. R. v.1

(R.) Oh, bless the Lord, my soul!

1. Lord God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,  
wrapped in light as in a robe!  
You stretch out the heavens like a tent. (R.)
2. Above the rains you build your dwelling.  
You make the clouds your chariot,  
you walk on the wings of the wind,  
you make the winds your messengers  
and flashing fire your servants. (R.)
3. How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
There is the sea, vast and wide,  
with its moving swarms past counting,  
living things great and small. (R.)
4. All of these look to you  
to give them their food in due season.  
You give it, they gather it up:  
you open your hand, they have their fill. (R.)
5. You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth. (R.)

### Second Reading      Ti 2:11-14; 3:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus  
God's grace has been revealed

### Gospel Acclamation    See Mk 9:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him.  
Alleluia!

### Gospel      Lk 3:15-16. 21-22

*When Jesus had been baptised and had been praying, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit came upon him.*

### Communion Antiphon      Jn 1:32,34

Behold the One of whom John said:  
I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

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## **HiStorical** **context**

### **Baptism**

John makes clear to the people that the baptism he performs is with water but the baptism by Jesus is with the Holy Spirit. John preached a baptism of repentance. In keeping with his Jewish tradition, John called upon the people to make a public declaration of their wrong-doing and commitment to be washed clean of this sinfulness and desire to live in right relationship with God and others. The baptism to which he refers is the complete change of heart and mind that comes through the Holy Spirit and results from a person accepting the message of Jesus.