

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

After the Lord was baptised, 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.

COLLECT

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, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING 42:1-4.6-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

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

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 28

Response: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

- O give the Lord you sons of God,
give the Lord glory and power;
give the Lord the glory of his name.
Adore the Lord in his holy court. (R)
- The Lord's voice resounding on the
waters,
the Lord on the immensity of waters;
the voice of the Lord, full of power,
the voice of the Lord, full of splendour. (R)
- The God of glory thunders.
In his temple they all cry: 'Glory!'
The Lord sat enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits as king for ever. (R)

SECOND READING 10:34-38

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

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.'
The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The heavens opened and the Father's voice resounded:

'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.'

Alleluia!

GOSPEL 1:7-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'
It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'
The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the offerings
we have brought to honour the revealing of
your beloved Son,
so that the oblation of your faithful
may be transformed into the sacrifice of
him
who willed in his compassion
to wash away the sins of the world.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold the One of whom John said:

I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

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.



GOSPEL REFLECTION

Why did Jesus go to John for baptism?
Why do you think baptism should be a
community event, rather than a private
experience?

Why is baptism important to the Christian
life? What roles do your family, godparents
or sponsor, friends, and community play
once you have been baptised? Does the
Holy Spirit play an important part in your
life? How? What are the characteristics of a
person filled with the Holy Spirit?

*What kind of life are you called to by
baptism? Where do you find the strength
and courage to live a life based on your
baptism?*

How might we experience baptism more
than once in our lives?

What would you say to someone who asks
you why they should be baptised?

The baptizing community becomes the
channel of grace for the newly baptized
person through the ongoing service and
sanctifying role of the church. How does
your community fulfil this role?

What is the responsibility of your faith
community to the children of the parish
after they are baptized? How is that
responsibility satisfied?

GOSPEL ACTION

*Try to actively live out at least one of your
baptismal promises this week. Find at least
one other person who will share with you
what the real power of God is in their life.*

Readings – 2nd Sunday Year B

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:3-10.19
Second Reading: 1Cor. 6:13-15.17-20
Gospel: John 1:35-42



A PASTORAL LETTER

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP AND PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

To be read at all Masses on the Sunday after the Epiphany

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

10th January 2021

My dear brothers and sisters,

As I write, a third National Lockdown has begun with many restrictions reducing our daily lives to “essentials.” The Government now recognises public worship as one of those essentials. Not a few may ask why churches remain open when other activities are prohibited; and some will question why worship remains the only legally permitted public gathering. Yet, we know that worship is not only a fundamental freedom: it is our primary human vocation. In short, worship is what we were made for!ⁱ The Catholic faith teaches that this worship is supremely offered in the Sacrifice of the Mass in which God is glorified and humanity sanctified.ⁱⁱ

It is your witness to this truth, which I have no doubt, has enabled public worship to be recognised as essential to society during this renewed lockdown. It is almost certainly the care with which all safety measures have been implemented in parishes which has now allowed the celebration of Mass and the Sacraments to continue. I wish, once again, to record my thanks to the clergy, the teams of parish volunteers and every member of the faithful who have together implemented and followed these safety requirements.

In all of this, we recognise the seriousness of our responsibility to help ensure the continuance of public worship and the safety of all. I ask you at the beginning of this New Year and a renewed state of lockdown, not to assume we have yet returned to “normal life” in our parishes; nor to give way to any sense of complacency, especially whilst a new variant of the virus is spreading rapidly. The continuance of public worship into Lent and Easter will, in large measure, depend on our vigilance and all our efforts to follow the measures which have already made our churches among the safest places in society.

In my letter to you in March of last year, I wrote of how these safety requirements can be lived in a spirit of charity. We continue to see how these demands call us to a refinement of charity. Requirements as strange - yet now so familiar - as social distancing, hand sanitising in church and wearing face coverings can serve as expressions of our love for our Lord and our love for the Mass, which continues to be publicly celebrated because of the careful fulfilment of such duties. If we ever feel fatigued in carrying out these requirements, let us renew them with love. At the end of the Christmas celebration, let us also do so with our gaze fixed on the Holy Eucharist, where the same Lord Jesus is now truly present whom wise men once fell down and worshipped; and whom Saint John the Baptist declared himself to be unfit even to kneel at His feet.ⁱⁱⁱ

As I picture you gathered in all the churches of the Diocese, may Saint Joseph - *the man who goes unnoticed, a support and guide in time of trouble*^{iv} - accompany us through these troubled times in fulfilling the greatness of our call to worship and our responsibility both to each other and to the whole of society.

Entrusting each of you to Saint Joseph's prayers,

+ *Mark*

Bishop of Shrewsbury

ⁱ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 2096

ⁱⁱ Second Vatican Council Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 7

ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Mt. 2: 11, Mk. 1: 8 & Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Council of Trent Session 13

^{iv} Cf. Patris Corde 8th December 2020

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion

10th January 2021 – Baptism of the Lord, Year B

Today as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, we offer all our prayers to the Heavenly Father:

For the Church and for Christians everywhere: joined together in faith and prayer may they draw closer to the Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are struggling and finding life difficult especially at this time of lockdown: may we support and help them through our love and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all essential workers particularly the doctors and nurses in our hospitals that are under such pressure: may they be granted the health and strength that they need as they continue to care for their sisters and brothers at this time. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those suffering from the coronavirus; may they know the grace and healing of Jesus the Lord of love and life.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are hungry and the poor in our world; may we be generous in sharing what we have with those who are less fortunate.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace in our world and an end to injustice, war and violence everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed especially **David Gorman, Stephen Roberts, Maureen Black, Brenda Williams** and all those who have died recently: **“Eternal rest grant unto them...”**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones; may Christ’s message of hope in eternal life bring them comfort and consolation.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask Our Lady and all the Saints to join their prayers with ours as we say: **“Hail Mary...”**

God our loving Father,
we ask you to hear the prayers that we offer
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion
10th January 2021 – Baptism of the Lord, Year B

Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and
I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.
Amen.