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## BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

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Baptism of our LORD 2021

January 10, 2021  
Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace  
[www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org](http://www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org)

## BAPTISM OF OUR LORD 2021

Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



Why did JESUS go to meet with John the Baptist at the Jordan? Why did the Holy Spirit have to descend upon the One who was conceived by the Holy Spirit? Perhaps JESUS was simply identifying with the crowd – for it cannot be that He needed to confess sins because Paul tells us in <sup>^</sup>2 Corinthians 5:21 that <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Indeed, JESUS is never described as doing so and is clearly the one who, in His own time, will baptise others with the Holy Spirit. <sup>^</sup>In verse 8 of our Gospel, John proclaims that <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.’ More likely, JESUS is identifying with John in his ministry of calling people to repentance and preparation of the way of the LORD.

Whilst John's baptism was simply in water, JESUS' ministry was to be characterised by the Anointed One – the Messiah – pouring out the Holy Spirit. It is unsurprising that He Himself should be baptised by the Father with the same Holy Spirit as He begins His messianic ministry.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he clearly thinks that the people he meets are believers. Luke describes them as 'disciples' (Acts 19:1). Some commentators, consequently, read this incident as evidence of the need for a second experience of receiving the Spirit. It is likely, however, that Paul sensed that they were somehow deficient in their experience of the Spirit as he questions them about it. They resemble those people in our Gospel passage who went to the River Jordan and had become John's disciples. They had received John's baptism, not as Christians though. They had not received the Spirit from the one John had identified – JESUS. Paul puts that right. They are baptised into the name of JESUS as Paul lays hands on them with prophecy and speaking in

tongues. Like their Master, Christians need an experience of the Holy Spirit to be able to serve GOD.



Last weekend, I had the privilege of baptising our grandson Percy along with a baby girl called Georgia who is a month younger. Her mother and our daughter went to school together. It was a very technologically contemporary baptism with Percy's godfather being in Sydney and being present via Zoom.

At the beginning of the Baptism service, we say these words:

Baptism is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he had risen from the dead, he commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We have come together today to obey that command.

Baptism with water signifies the cleansing from sin that Jesus' death makes possible, and the new life that God gives us through the Holy Spirit.

In baptism, the promises of God are visibly signed and sealed for us. We are joined to Christ, and made members of his body, the Church universal.

During the baptism service we affirm as ours the faith of the Church as summarised in the words of the Apostles' Creed. I ask parents and godparents 3 questions –

1. Do you believe in GOD the Father?
2. Do you believe in GOD the Son?
3. Do you believe in GOD the Holy Spirit?

By the time they have answered these 3 questions, parents and godparents have recited the Apostles' Creed. If you are ever asked what you believe as a Christian person, you can do little better than recite the Apostles' Creed.

So, in baptism, we believe in and encounter the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We'll talk more about the Trinity later in the year – suffice to say we believe that we encounter GOD as 3 distinct – though NOT separate – Persons. GOD the Father is the Creator of the Universe. GOD the Son became human –

incarnate – and was known as JESUS of Nazareth. GOD the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets of the Old Testament, guided JESUS during His earthly life and ministry, and speaks through the hearts of the believers in the Church.

So, how is each person of the Holy Trinity present in today's Gospel?

In the story of JESUS' baptism, all 3 Persons of the Holy Trinity are present.

GOD the Son – JESUS – is of course present since He is the One being baptised. GOD the Father's voice speaks from the heavens. GOD the HOLY SPIRIT descends on the scene like a dove – a reference to the first chapter of the book of Genesis. The ancient Hebrew people believed that there was a "dome of the sky" that separated heaven from earth. If the heavens were torn open, then that would mean that human beings could look directly at GOD. When we look at JESUS, we are looking at GOD.

The second creation story in the Book of Genesis – in chapters 2 and 3 – describes the creation as the first ‘son’ of GOD: Adam. Unfortunately, this first creation did not do what GOD wanted him to do. JESUS – the new Adam – shows us how to truly be sons and daughters of GOD by doing all that GOD asked of Him.

We also hear about a dove in the story of Noah’s Ark in Genesis 6-8. Noah sent out a dove to see if the floodwaters that cover the earth were receding. When the dove returns with a fresh olive branch, Noah knew that the rains and the flooding had ended, and that new life was being restored to earth. JESUS, too, brings new life. JESUS offers us eternal life.

JESUS was already united with GOD, as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – and was without sin. We celebrate the Baptism of JESUS because it was a turning point in human history. It is the beginning of JESUS’ public ministry. JESUS’ ministry, life, death and resurrection are the ultimate act of love by GOD.



Every year, on the eve of the Resurrection of JESUS on Easter Day, we renew our baptismal vows. By doing so, we proclaim and celebrate how GOD has affirmed and empowered us in CHRIST.

**May we pray:**

All powerful Father, we have been reborn by water and the HOLY SPIRIT. Forgive us our sins. Keep us steadfast in our commitment to grow in holiness. This we pray in the name of JESUS. Amen

Daily Prayer 2020

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Daily Prayer 2021, Liturgy Training Publications. Archdiocese of

Chicago IL 60609