

Readings for 10th January, The Baptism of Christ

Introduction and Call to Worship

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus Christ. It is a moment in time that reveals who he is. In that light we remember our own baptisms, which reveal who we are: children of God.

COLLECT

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

FIRST READING *Genesis 1:1-5*

In the opening words of the Bible we hear of God creating the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day", and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.

SECOND READING *Acts 19:1-7*

Paul meets some disciples in Ephesus who have been baptised by John the Baptist. Paul baptises them in the name of Jesus Christ and they speak in tongues and prophesy.

¹While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. ²He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' ³Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' ⁴Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.' ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied – ⁷altogether there were about twelve of them.

GOSPEL *Mark 1:4-11*

Jesus meets John who is baptising the people in the River Jordan. As John baptises Jesus, Jesus sees the heavens torn apart, the Holy Spirit descends on him and the voice of God proclaims him beloved.

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord of all time and eternity, you opened the heavens and revealed yourself as Father in the baptism of Jesus your beloved Son: by the power of your Spirit complete the heavenly work of our rebirth through the waters of the new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.