

# Homily for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

*First Reading - Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7;*

*Second Reading - Acts 10:34-38;*

*Gospel - Matthew 3:13-17*

Today we bring the Christmas season to its close with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Throughout these weeks we have celebrated how God reveals himself: first to Israel at Christmas, then to the nations at Epiphany, and today, at the Jordan, God reveals who Jesus truly is—and who *we* are called to be because of him.

In the Gospel, Jesus comes to the Jordan, not as a sinner seeking forgiveness, but as the beloved Son who chooses to stand in solidarity with sinners. John the Baptist is understandably hesitant. He knows who Jesus is. Yet Jesus insists: *“Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.”* In other words, Jesus steps fully into the human condition. He does not remain distant or untouched by our brokenness. He enters the waters with us.

The prophet Isaiah helps us understand what is happening. God speaks of his chosen servant: *“Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.”* These words echo again in the Gospel when the heavens open and the Father’s voice declares: *“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

Jesus is revealed as the Servant of the Lord not a conqueror, not a ruler who dominates, but one who brings justice quietly, faithfully, and compassionately. Isaiah tells us he will not break the bruised reed or quench the smouldering wick. This is the kind of Messiah Jesus chooses to be, and this is the mission he accepts at his Baptism.

Saint Peter, in the Acts of the Apostles, makes clear what flows from that moment at the Jordan. After Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, Peter says, *“He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil.”* Baptism is not just a revelation; it is a commissioning. Jesus’ public ministry begins here with the Spirit upon him, sent to bring healing, freedom, and hope.

And that brings us to ourselves. Because this feast is not only about what happened to Jesus long ago. It is about **what happened to us** at our own Baptism.

When we were baptised, the heavens were opened over us as well. We may not have heard a voice or seen a dove, but the same Spirit was poured into our hearts. God spoke a word over us too: *“You are my beloved child.”* Before we had achieved anything, before we had failed or succeeded, God claimed us as his own. Our Baptism gave us an identity before it gave us a task. We are sons and daughters of God—beloved, chosen, and cherished. And like Jesus, we are also given a mission.

Isaiah says the servant is called *“to open the eyes of the blind, to bring prisoners out of confinement.”* In today’s world, that mission is as urgent as ever. We live among people blinded by despair, fear, loneliness, addiction, injustice, and indifference. Many are imprisoned not by bars, but by anxiety, resentment, poverty, or lack of hope.

Through our Baptism, we are sent into this world not as spectators, but as witnesses. Not necessarily with great speeches, but by lives shaped by mercy, patience, and

courage. Each time we choose forgiveness over revenge, compassion over judgment, truth over convenience, we are living out our Baptism.

Today's feast also challenges us to ask honestly: **Do we remember our Baptism as a life-changing call, or have we reduced it to a family event from the past?**

There is a well-known story of a priest who asked parents preparing for their child's Baptism, "Baptism is a serious step. Are you prepared for it?" "I think so," the man replied. "My wife has made appetisers, and we have a caterer coming to provide plenty of cookies and cakes for all of our guests." "I don't mean that," the priest responded. "I mean, are you prepared spiritually?" "Oh, sure," came the reply. "I've got a keg of beer and a case of whiskey." "The priest gently replied, "I don't mean the party. I mean: are you ready to raise this child as a disciple of Christ?"

That question comes to all of us today. Are we prepared to live what our Baptism means? As we conclude the Christmas season, the Church invites us to stand again at the Jordan. To remember who Jesus is. To remember who we are. And to renew our commitment to live as people who have been baptised into Christ, filled with the Spirit, loved by the Father, and sent to bring light into the world.

May this Eucharist strengthen us to live our Baptism faithfully, not just on special occasions, but every day, until we stand one day before the Father and hear those same words spoken to us:

*"You are my beloved child. With you I am well pleased."*