



Morning Prayer
Baptism of Christ
10th January 2021

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

10 January 2021

Baptism of Christ

† Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers of Penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world
through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.
Let us confess our sins.

cf Titus 2.11-14

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us**

**and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

† The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 29

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name;
worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of glory thunders;
the Lord is upon the mighty waters.
- 4 The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation;
the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice.
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees;
the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
- 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
- 7 The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning;
the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 8 The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe
and strips the forests bare;
in his temple all cry, 'Glory!'
- 9 The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king for evermore.
- 10 The Lord shall give strength to his people;
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 1.1-5

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of
the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the
waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.
⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light
from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he
called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the
first day.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

A Song of the New Jerusalem

- 1 Arise, shine out, for your light has come,
the glory of the Lord is rising upon you.
- 2 Though night still covers the earth,
and darkness the peoples;
- 3 Above you the Holy One arises,
and above you God's glory appears.
- 4 The nations will come to your light,
and kings to your dawning brightness.
- 5 Your gates will lie open continually,
shut neither by day nor by night.
- 6 The sound of violence shall be heard no longer in your land,
or ruin and devastation within your borders.
- 7 You will call your walls, Salvation,
and your gates, Praise.

- 8 No more will the sun give you daylight,
nor moonlight shine upon you;
- 9 But the Lord will be your everlasting light,
your God will be your splendour.
- 10 For you shall be called the city of God,
the dwelling of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 60.1-3, 11a, 18-19, 14b

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Second Reading

Mark 1.4-11

⁴John the baptiser 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 baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised 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.'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,

and Christ shall give you light.

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1.68-79

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.



Prayers

For the cleansing of the Church and of the world, let us pray to the Lord.

Keep the Church true in obedience to the example and command of her Lord to baptise for the forgiveness of sins and into the life of faith ... Give grace to all Christian people to live according to the promises made at their baptism.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray that the whole world may know the healing power of God ... Let the voice of his messengers be heard and his name be praised among all nations.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who at this time are preparing for baptism, remembering especially those known to us and those who live in this community ... We pray that godparents shall remember their responsibility for the spiritual life of those they have sponsored.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Have mercy on all who have fallen away from their vows of baptism or other solemn promises that they have made ... Grant them the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring them back into the way of holiness.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the departed who began their earthly lives by following Christ in baptism and have passed with him through death to life ... May their joy be for ever in the worship of the Holy Trinity.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray in the name of Christ who has made us his own in baptism.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Collect is said.

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.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

¶ The Conclusion

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

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The Baptism of Christ

by Bridget Nichols

ALL four Gospels record the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3.13-17, Mark 1.4-11, Luke 3.21-22, John 1.29-34). That suggests immediately the importance of the event, but it also presents us with a puzzle. Is what happens at the Jordan about Jesus or about baptism?

That question has been sharpened by continually growing historical and liturgical interest in baptism, its origins, meaning, and ceremonial. For the first generations of Christians, however, it may not have made much sense to try to separate the significance of Jesus from the significance of his baptism.

In the space of eight verses, Mark manages to use words with their root in "baptise" six times. This event mattered. Why it mattered did not have so much to do with the way in which it was done, as with the fact that it was Jesus undergoing the kind of baptism John offered to all who came to him. In the midst of a common experience, he is publicly acknowledged as the Son of God.

The effect of that public acknowledgement is easy to miss in the Gospel accounts, which concentrate on the dynamic between Jesus and John the Baptist, and the proclamation from heaven which accompanies Jesus's emergence from the water: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1.11, Matthew 3.17, Luke 3.22).

Happily, the artistic imagination was more alert. The 17th-century painter Nicholas Poussin produced two series of works depicting the Seven Sacraments. Both of the "Baptism" paintings show John baptising Jesus in the presence of a number of awestruck people who are pointing at the descending dove. In the earlier version, it is clear that these are fellow baptismal candidates, so distracted that they have not even put all their clothes on again. Perhaps Poussin had worked closely with the Marcan narrative, with its vivid description of "the heavens torn apart", to achieve such a tangible sense of alarm. The later interpretation is calmer and more decorous; but the point of both is that there were

enough people there to stand as witnesses. In future, their testimony might count.

Yet, what people think they have seen and heard is often subjective. Whoever took the good news to the baffled Ephesians with whom Paul tried to discuss the Holy Spirit (Acts 19.1-7) had not grasped that, after the baptism of Jesus, there is only one baptism.

Paul's brisk account of the difference Jesus makes to baptism may be one of the earliest records of a form of catechism. The words were simple and direct, but they conveyed this truth: that, as with every other human institution Jesus shared, baptism, too, is transformed. It is no longer just about repentance (Mark 1.4), but about the gift of the Spirit. It is the first hint of the glory that he is prepared to share with humanity, made more explicit when he is transfigured in the presence of three disciples and once more acknowledged as the beloved Son of God (Mark 9.2-8, and see Matthew 17.1-9, Luke 9.28-36).

This is the promise that Christians are invited to claim through their baptism. Though the first verses of Genesis in modern translations do not evoke the idea of a hovering dove as the Authorised Version did (Genesis 1.2 "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"), that loss is redeemed in the gain of a stronger typological relationship with the profound sense of Jesus's baptism. God the Creator speaks into something that is almost too difficult to describe, even to an audience that has seen satellite images of distant galaxies and been introduced to scientific arguments for the origin of the universe - "a formless void" (Genesis 1.2).

The first move in resolving this dark, unstructured mass is the creation of light, an astonishing achievement summed up with beautiful understatement as "the first day" (Genesis 1.5). That first day is recapitulated in the way Mark positions Jesus's baptism as the very first thing that happens to him. It is the event that reveals his identity and empowers him for his earthly ministry.

For those who are "born again by water and the Spirit" (collect of the day) in baptism, and thereby also made sharers in Christ's death and

resurrection (Romans 6.3-4), it is a momentous first day: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (2 Corinthians 5.17).