

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD



Inbreaking

God our comfort,
you are with us!
You gather us in your arms,
embrace us in protection,
purify us,
and lead us with care.
We are filled with expectation—
help us to walk by your light
and see your inbreaking.
Send forth your Spirit
and renew the face of the earth.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, January 12, 2025

New Creation



Today's readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 104:1b–2, 3–4, 24–25, 27–28, 29–30; Titus 2:11–14, 3:4–7; Luke 3:15–16, 21–22. John the Baptist says: “One mightier than I is coming. . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” In other words, he will come to purify us. What a gift! Jesus did not need to be baptized, but in choosing to do so, he cleansed the waters and showed his solidarity with us so that we could be reconciled to God. In baptism, the Holy Spirit “moves us to answer Christ’s call to holiness . . . we are asked to walk by the light of Christ and to trust in his wisdom,” reads the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*. Spend time this week contemplating your baptism.

On that day, you were welcomed into the Body of Christ and made a new creation. How does that inspire you?

On this last day of the Christmas season, we hear that at Jesus’ baptism, God’s voice proclaimed: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” God continues to make himself known to us. As we enter Ordinary Time, consider how you will remember the joy of God becoming human every time you go to Mass. How will you reflect on the gift of salvation long past the end of this Christmas season? Make it a point in your day to continue to be open to God presence.



THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Monday, January 13

Repent and Follow Jesus

Jesus calls the first disciples: “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Simon, Andrew, James, and John abandon their nets and follow him. Find a parish where the sacrament of reconciliation is offered this week. Repent and respond to Jesus’ call to follow him. *Today’s readings: Hebrews 1:1–6; Psalm 97:1 and 2b, 6 and 7c, 9; Mark 1:14–20.*

Saturday, January 18

Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity starts today. It was first celebrated in 1908 because division weakens the power of the Christian witness. The entire Christian community is invited to join in prayer. Visit the World Council of Churches’ website to learn about this year’s theme and to find resources to participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. *Today’s readings: Hebrews 4:12–16; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mark 2:13–17.*

Saturday, January 25

The Conversion of St. Paul

Today the Church observes the conversion of St. Paul. The Lord calls Saul after “a light from the sky” flashes suddenly around him. Saul is temporarily physically blinded, symbolizing his religious blindness. Though the conversion of others around us may not be as sudden as St. Paul’s, let us celebrate today by reflecting on the strength it takes to return to the Lord. Say a prayer for those who persecute followers of Christ: may their eyes be opened and may they have the courage to say yes to following the way of the Lord. *Today’s readings: Acts 22:3–16 or Acts 9:1–22; Psalm 117:1bc, 2; Mark 16:15–18.*

Sunday, February 2

The Presentation of the Lord

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord is also known as Candlemas Day. Candles might be blessed during a liturgy to symbolize Christ, the light of the world. Light a candle and say a prayer in gratitude for your faith. Since Jesus is fully human, he knows well our joys and struggles, and is thus “able to help those who are being tested.” Rest in peace today knowing that the Lord deeply understands all you are experiencing and is holding it with you. *Today’s readings: Malachi 3:1–4; Psalm 24:7, 8, 9, 10; Hebrews 2:14–18; Luke 2:22–40.*

Thursday, February 6

St. Paul Miki and Companions

Jesuit brother Paul Miki, born into a noble Japanese family, and his companions were martyred by crucifixion in Nagasaki in 1597. The group consisted of Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries and Japanese lay people who were offered freedom if they renounced Christianity. They courageously declined. In today’s Gospel, we hear that Jesus sent the apostles out in twos to evangelize. Like the group martyred with St. Paul Miki, the work of brave evangelization can be done in community. Reach out to someone who inspires your faith. How can you preach the Good News together? *Today’s readings: Hebrews 12:18–19, 21–24; Psalm 48:2–3ab, 3cd–4, 9, 10–11; Mark 6:7–13.*

Saturday, February 22

The Chair of St. Peter

Jesus says Peter is the rock upon which the Church will be built. He was called to carry forth the mission of the Church so it could be passed down to future generations. The pope serves as the successor of St. Peter. Spend time learning something new about the pope and his apostolic mission today. Say a prayer in gratitude for those who have passed your faith on to you. *Today’s readings: 1 Peter 5:1–4; Psalm 23:1–3a, 4, 5, 6; Matthew 16:13–19.*

