

LIVING FAITH

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

JANUARY 10, 2021

THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

MARK 1:7-11

John 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And 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. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

REFLECTING ON THE WORD OF GOD

The coming of the new year is a new beginning of sorts for us all. If nothing else, it is the start of a new calendar year and many people reflect on their lives over the past year and resolve to do things differently in the new year. Likewise, as the liturgical Christmas season ends today with the Feast of the baptism of Our Lord, we see a new beginning for the now adult Jesus: his own Baptism.

In Year B of the cycle of readings, we hear from the evangelist Mark. Scholars tell us that Mark is the first of the canonical Gospels written and he begins with Jesus as an adult being Baptized, marking the start of his ministry.

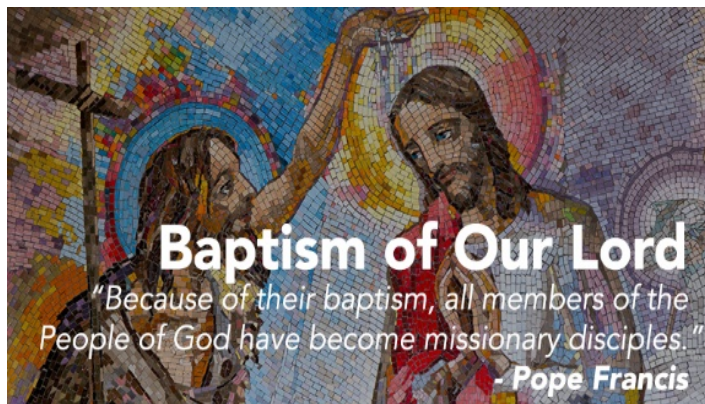
It is here in his Baptism that Jesus hears his call to mission. He gathers with the others who come to John, and hears a voice that tells him he is the Son of God, and God is pleased with him. John's movement was one of change and repentance and it attracted many. Jesus comes to this movement and begins his work; he is being sent forth with the knowledge that he belongs to God. God will reach out to the people in a new way, through Jesus.

For most of us, we do not remember our Baptism. But it too was a new beginning for us; we began our relationship with Christ in Baptism. Whereas Jesus, in Mark Gospel, begins his life of ministry at his Baptism, we were first baptized and then years later try to understand what that means and to live our life in the light of it. The Baptism of Jesus invites us once again to reflect on our own Baptism, and what it means for us. As we move into this new Year, may the fruit of that reflection guide our thoughts and actions.

TALKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



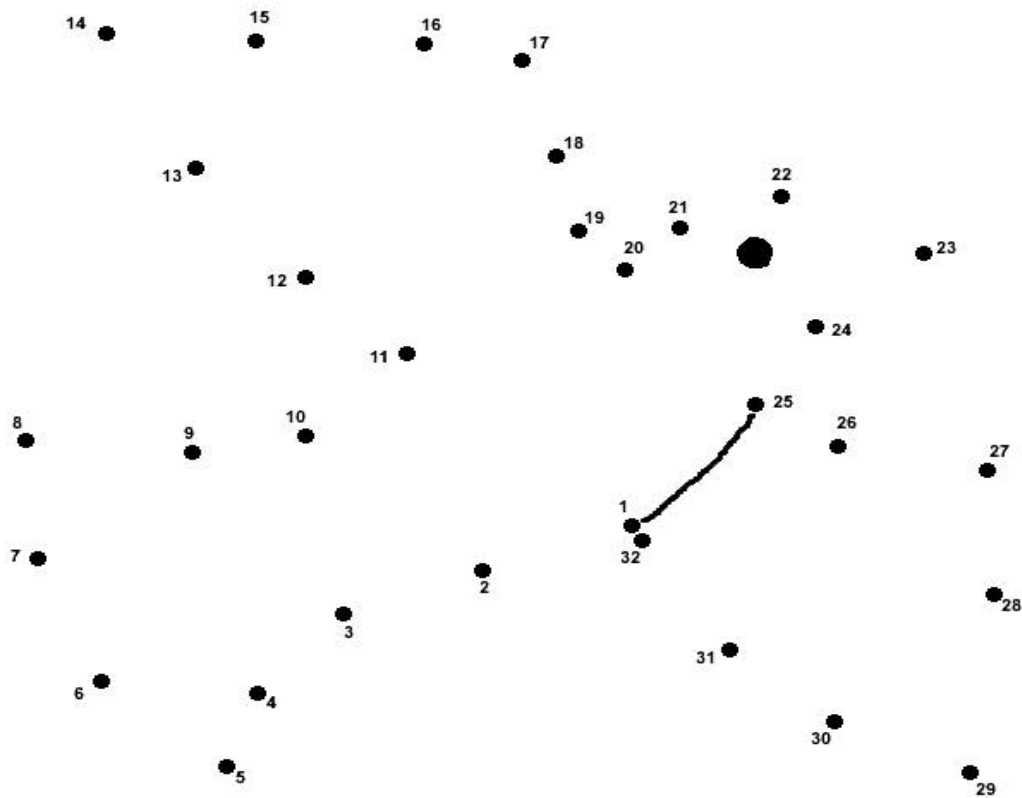
- For parents: What was the greatest hope that you had for your children when you brought them to be Baptized? What is your greatest hope now? Why did you choose to present your children for Baptism?
- For children: Ask your parents to share some memories and pictures of your Baptism.





The Baptism of Jesus

Connect the Dots



The Spirit of God descending like a dove.
Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22

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THE CHURCH TEACHES

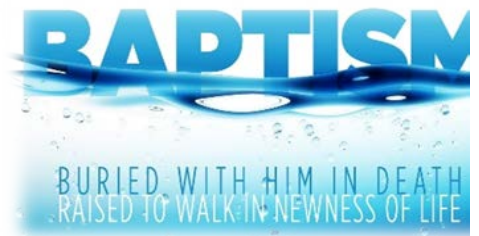
BAPTISM IN THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

Have you ever been part of a Baptism? What did you see? What parts of the celebration stood out for you?

1253 Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning.



Who has helped you to grow in faith?



1254 For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow *after* Baptism. For this reason the Church celebrates each year at the Easter Vigil the renewal of baptismal promises. Preparation for Baptism leads only to the threshold of new life. Baptism is the source of that new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth.

How has your faith grown and matured?





POPE FRANCIS PROCLAIMS THE YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH



DECEMBER 8, 2020-DECEMBER 8, 2021

In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, and a father in the shadows.

The first aspect of St Joseph that Pope Francis shines a light on is of Joseph as **a beloved father** to Jesus and husband to the Our Lady. Here’s what Pope Francis has to say...

The greatness of Saint Joseph is that he was the spouse of Mary and the father of Jesus. In this way, he placed himself, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, “at the service of the entire plan of salvation”.

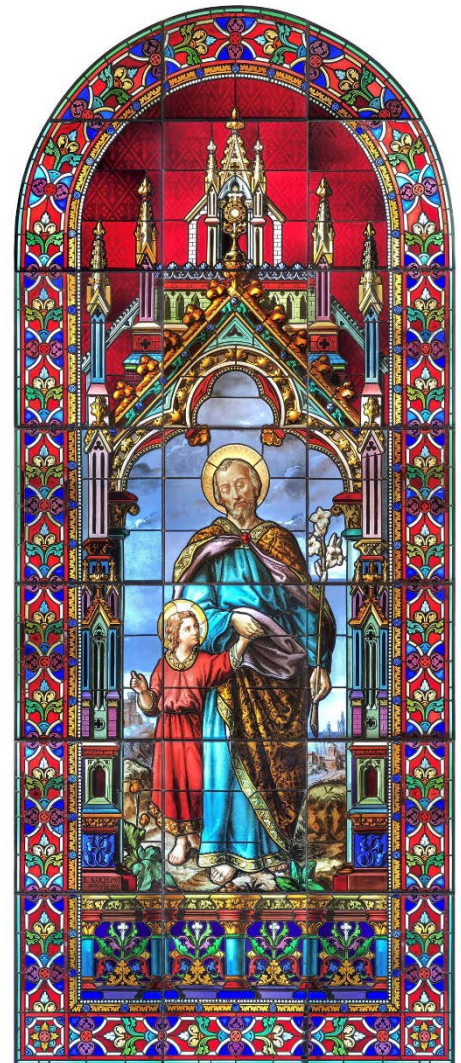
Saint Paul VI pointed out that Joseph concretely expressed his fatherhood “by making his life a sacrificial service to the mystery of the incarnation and its redemptive purpose. He employed his legal authority over the Holy Family to devote himself completely to them in his life and work. He turned his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home”.

Thanks to his role in salvation history, Saint Joseph has always been venerated as a father by the Christian people. This is shown by the countless churches dedicated to him worldwide, the numerous religious Institutes, Confraternities and ecclesial groups inspired by his spirituality and bearing his name, and the many traditional expressions of piety in his honour. Innumerable holy men and women were passionately devoted to him. Among them was Teresa of Avila, who chose him as her advocate and intercessor, had frequent recourse to him and received whatever graces she asked of him. Encouraged by her own experience, Teresa persuaded others to cultivate devotion to Joseph.

Every prayer book contains prayers to Saint Joseph. Special prayers are offered to him each Wednesday and especially during the month of March, which is traditionally dedicated to him.

Popular trust in Saint Joseph is seen in the expression “Go to Joseph”, which evokes the famine in Egypt, when the Egyptians begged Pharaoh for bread. He in turn replied: “Go to Joseph; what he says to you, do” (*Gen 41:55*). Pharaoh was referring to Joseph the son of Jacob, who was sold into slavery because of the jealousy of his brothers (cf. *Gen 37:11-28*) and who – according to the biblical account – subsequently became viceroy of Egypt (cf. *Gen 41:41-44*).

As a descendant of David (cf. *Mt 1:16-20*), from whose stock Jesus was to spring according to the promise made to David by the prophet Nathan (cf. *2 Sam 7*), and as the spouse of Mary of Nazareth, Saint Joseph stands at the crossroads between the Old and New Testaments.



The window depicting St Joseph with the child Jesus, found in the clerestory level in the Basilica-Cathedral of St John the Baptist, St John’s.

This window was crafted in Beauvais, France by Louis Lichtenfeld-Koch in 1891.



View Pope Francis’ Apostolic letter *Patris corde* [here](#).

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