



Stained glass window in the Cathedral of Brussels, Belgium depicting Jesus' baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist

## JESUS IS BAPTISED: WHY?

(LUKE 3:15-16, 21-22)

We find mention of Jesus' being baptised at the beginning of all four Gospel versions. However, this presents a couple of problems, which Luke carefully avoids.

If John the Baptist baptises Jesus, does not this suggest that he is, somehow, greater than the one whom he baptises? Also, may this ritual not suggest that Jesus is a sinner in need of repentance? In the first part of our Gospel reading, John clearly declares himself to be the forerunner to the one more powerful. This person will bring a baptism, not of water, but of the Holy Spirit and of fire, the two elements which we find later in the Lukan writings at Pentecost, the last act of the Easter mystery.

Luke is also, like the other evangelists, beginning the story of Jesus' ministry. He wants our focus to be on the person and activity of Jesus, so he deftly removes John the Baptist from the narrative. There is room for only one major character on the stage at a time. The office of prophet passes from the Baptist to Jesus. This idea of the prophet will be a major theme in Luke's Gospel account.

The baptism of Jesus is another epiphany. Luke presents it as a personal, interior experience of Jesus, rather than one addressed to the wider group present. However, we are given a glimpse of this revelation by the author, that Jesus is "God's Son, the Beloved". The stage is now set for Jesus to embark on his ministry. ■

## REFLECT

**W**hy did Jesus present himself for baptism from John? Luke actually plays down John's role; he does not give any details about the ritual itself, or who carried it out. He avoids any suggestion that Jesus was guilty of sin which had to be forgiven. So what was the point?

Perhaps the solution to this conundrum might lie in the idea of solidarity. Jesus wished to show that he identified himself with all those people (including ourselves) who want to live a decent human life under the word of God. This means acknowledging shortcomings and intending to do better in future.

The idea of missing the mark, of falling short, is at the root of the most common New Testament word for sin. The notion that most Christian people are in open revolt against the will of God by greatly sinning is not implied in falling short. Perhaps by being baptised, Jesus is saying that he is on the side of all those who are doing their best, despite their weaknesses, and that it is this attempt to live up to the ideals of the Gospel which is more important. One feature of ideals is that they are usually (just?) out of reach, but it is the effort to live up to them which is most important. If we fail, it is not the end of the world: this seems to be what Jesus kept striving to tell people throughout his ministry. So let's keep trying! ■

## LEARN

The Baptism of Jesus is an *epiphany*: he is revealed as the Son of God.

The word *epiphany* means showing or revealing: the event tells us something about who Jesus really is.

The four Gospel narratives properly begin with the figure and ministry of John the Baptist.

## SAY

**The Lord will bless his people with peace.**

(Psalm 28:11)

## DO

Put some water in a bowl: make the sign of the Cross with it and renew your own baptismal commitment to God in Jesus.



# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## The Baptism of the Lord – 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022

### Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim  
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

### Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet  
Tues 9:00pm Dromara  
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim  
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

I will be on holiday Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Jan – Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Jan  
There will be no weekday masses 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> Jan  
For emergency sick calls or deaths pleas try Fr Brian Brown on 074 9673 1619

**Recently deceased** Sinead Ward, Bannonstown Rd  
Aidan McAnulty, Belfast

### Anniversary Masses

#### Dechomet

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Maggie Doyle  
Sat 15<sup>th</sup> John Fitzpatrick

#### Leitrim

Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Frank McElroy  
Bridie Madine  
Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Pat McAnulty

### God's Word

#### The Baptism of the Lord

Today's feast marks the end of the Christmas season and prepares us for the story of Jesus' earthly work as it will unfold during the rest of the church's year. The Gospel has two parts. The first describes the feeling of expectancy that had gripped the people. John the Baptist was a fresh voice that rang out with authority. Could he be the long-awaited Messiah who would throw off the yoke of the Roman oppressor and restore the ancient kingdom of Israel? John is quick to dampen their expectations. Someone more powerful than he is coming, he says, whose sandals he is unfit to untie. The second part describes the baptism of Jesus and its aftermath. Luke tells us little about the baptism itself. Jesus takes his place among the crowds that allowed John to submerge them in the Jordan river as a sign of their desire to repent and to be cleansed of sin. Shortly afterwards, while 'Jesus was at prayer,' the heavens open. It's not easy for us to imagine the heavens opening. We use that phrase

for a heavy rain shower. For a Jew, it would mean that the barrier separating the earthly world from the heavenly is opened for a moment. 'The Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove.' In the Old Testament, the Spirit descended on prophets to mark them out as God's servants. The opening chapter of the bible describes how the Spirit of God 'hovers over the deep,' as though the Spirit were some great bird. The heavenly voice declares that this man on whom the Spirit rests is not simply another prophet: he is the Son, the Beloved, on whom God's favour rests

### Collections Dromara Drumgooland

Christmas	£935	£2335
Parish Sun 26 <sup>th</sup>	£555	£1756
Parish Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	£572	£683
Priest Sun 2 <sup>nd</sup>	£554	£815

Thank you for the very generous offering at Christmas and for all the donations to the parish and monthly priest's collection.

### First Communion and Confirmation Dates

I will discuss possible dates with the schools in early February and publish them as soon as possible. Hopefully it will be possible to celebrate these sacraments after Easter this year. The P4's will hopefully make their First Confessions this year as well.

### Canon Gerry McCrory

There will be a month mind's mass for him on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 7:30pm in St Michael's Church, Finnis.

He served Dromara for 10 years as PP and helped Fr Mooney, especially at Christmas and Easter, for many years in Leitrim.

### We welcome into Dromara Parish Turlough McKay

Many Thanks to all of those who supported in any way the Mary's Meals walk on Tuesday past. The fine weather was a Blessing and the great turnout enabled us to collect £1500 for the charity, this means that 188 children will have a meal in their place of education for a year.  
Thanks Again Rita and Paul Greeran.