



Bringing Home the Word

The Baptism of the Lord (A)

January 11, 2026

Signal of a New Beginning

Mary Katharine Deeley

In the sacrament of baptism, we stress that the person is no longer bound by original sin; rather, despite still retaining the wounds caused by original sin, he or she becomes free to live as a child of God, embracing the will of God through discipleship in Jesus Christ. We're free to live not as the world dictates but as those who know, love, and serve God in this world and look forward to being with him in the next.

Adults who go through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults have time to reflect on the conversion necessary for such transformation, but for many of us, the significance of our baptism as infants gets lost in the long years

between childhood and adulthood. We stop being mindful of the power of grace and the necessity of turning our lives over to God, regardless of the work we do or the community we belong to.

We may have wondered why Jesus presented himself for baptism. Wasn't he God, born without sin? Of course, the answer is yes. But Jesus came to his baptism as a public witness of the need to turn over our lives to God. Like us in all things, Jesus approached John for the ritual washing that signaled a new beginning. It was a sign for us and a wonderful way to mark the beginning of his ministry.

Matthew records that he heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). In baptism, God welcomes all of us as beloved children. Out of gratitude and praise, we, in turn, follow Jesus. And so, we submit our lives to God—proclaiming justice, doing good, and loving God and others as we love ourselves. †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 42:1–4, 6–7

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased.

Acts 10:34–38

He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Matthew 3:13–17

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

***Jesus came to his baptism
as a public witness
of the need to turn over
our lives to God.***

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

In the family, faith is handed on together with life, generation after generation. It is shared like the food at the family table and like the love in our hearts. In this way, families become privileged places in which to encounter Jesus, who loves us and desires our good, always.

HOMILY, ROME, JUNE 1, 2025



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I know the date I was baptized?
- How might I commemorate that anniversary of my rebirth in Christ?



A Healthy Relationship with God

Mark G. Boyer

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,

And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

"JOY TO THE WORLD!" VERSE 1

In Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist uniquely tries to prevent it, declaring that he needs to be baptized by Jesus. Jesus, however, tells him to do it in order to fulfill all righteousness, and John baptizes the Lord, who has come into the world. The fulfillment-of-righteousness theme in Matthew's Gospel indicates a healthy relationship with God. To demonstrate that Jesus and God have a good relationship, God's Spirit descends upon Jesus at his baptism, and God declares, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

The selection from Peter's speech to Cornelius and the members of his household in the Acts of the Apostles emphasizes the same point. Peter has just witnessed the Spirit come upon the Gentiles; this leads him to conclude that God shows no partiality to the Jews. Anyone who acts uprightly, that is in righteousness; anyone who prepares room for God

in his or her heart is acceptable to God. Isaiah, too, writes about this topic, presenting the servant of the LORD, the one with whom God is pleased, the one who brings the victory of justice, the result of a healthy relationship with God.

Baptism begins a healthy relationship with God. The righteousness that baptism begins, however, like the beginning of any other relationship, must be nourished. It requires commitment. There is nothing magical about it. Just as Jesus' baptism launched his mission of proclaiming God's kingdom, so our baptism launched our mission of relating to God in order to fulfill all righteousness. †

Anyone who prepares room for God in his or her heart is acceptable to God.

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Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Baptism: Our Lifelong Call" by Nicholas Lohkamp, OFM

Our baptism puts us in touch with Jesus, the Word made flesh, the incarnate expression of God's love. Jesus is my way to live and find God; the truth of who I am and who I am called to become. To be a Catholic is to seek to become fully human. As St. Irenaeus said, "The glory of God is the human person fully alive." It is Jesus who helps me become ever more human and therein discover the mystery of my calling to share divine life. In Jesus, we are called to freedom. I am not born free; I am born with the capacity to become free. It takes grace and a lot of hard work to become free, to become a mature person, so that I can love as Jesus does.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Lord Jesus, that we may live as children of God, always listening for his true voice, we pray—
Be born in us, be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 12–17

Monday, Weekday:

1 Sm 1:1–8 / Mk 1:14–20

Tuesday, Weekday:

1 Sm 1:9–20 / Mk 1:21–28

Wednesday, Weekday:

1 Sm 3:1–10, 19–20 / Mk 1:29–39

Thursday, Weekday:

1 Sm 4:1–11 / Mk 1:40–45

Friday, Weekday:

1 Sm 8:4–7, 10–22a / Mk 2:1–12

Saturday, St. Anthony:

1 Sm 8:4–7, 10–22a / Mk 2:1–12



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