

Theme of the Week - Baptism

January 12th is the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in the Catholic Church. It marks the end of the Christmas season and celebrates the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. The baptism of Jesus is a significant event, rich in theological meaning, as described in Luke's Gospel. It marks Jesus' revelation as part of the Holy Trinity, with the Father's voice and the Holy Spirit descending in love. Jesus' entry into the Jordan, not as a sinner but as the sinless one, sanctifies the waters, transforming baptism from a mere symbol of repentance to a sacrament of inner renewal and rebirth, inaugurating Christian baptism.

This moment serves as a pivotal point in Jesus' life and mission, setting the stage for his ministry and ultimate sacrifice on the cross, leading to the Resurrection. Christian baptism, modelled on Jesus' baptism, signifies dying to sin and receiving the life of Christ, making believers children of God and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

The descent of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism also institutes the sacrament of confirmation. Through confirmation, believers receive a mission and the power to fulfil it, emphasizing that being a Christian involves active participation in Christ's work of transforming the world. The text highlights the essential role of all Christians, not just clergy, in this mission, underlining that baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist together form the foundational sacraments of initiation.

Jesus allowed John the Baptist to baptize Him as an act of obedience to God's plan and as a way to identify with humanity's need for repentance and redemption. Jesus' baptism serves as a model for Christian baptism. It signifies repentance, the washing away of sin (even though Jesus Himself was sinless), and the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. It also emphasizes the importance of obedience to God and living a life aligned with His will. In essence, Jesus' baptism was an act of humility, a public declaration of His mission, and a powerful demonstration of God's redemptive plan for humanity.

The gospel passage from Luke connects to many virtues from our Pupil Profile, including being **Active** and **Curious**, Intentional and Prophetic:

The people's expectant waiting and their wonder about whether John might be the Messiah show a spirit of **curiosity**. They were **actively** seeking truth and understanding about the identity of the one who would bring salvation.

Jesus intentionally participates in baptism, even though he is sinless, to set an example and inaugurate his public ministry. This deliberate action reflects a purpose-driven life. John's proclamation of Jesus as the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire is a prophetic act. He prepares the way for Jesus and points others toward the transformative work of the Messiah.

What questions do you have about God or faith, and how can you explore them with **curiosity**?
What can you do this week to demonstrate that you are **active** and **curious** in everything that you do both at St. Joseph's and outside school?

Baptism

Weekly Reflections
12th January 2025
Feast of the Baptism of the
Lord



From the Gospel of Luke (3: 15-16; 21-22)

At that time: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, 'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Now when all the people were baptised by John the Baptist and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'

Prayer for the Week

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of Baptism. In your love, you have called us to know you, led us to trust you, and bound our life with yours. We pray that you surround us with your love and protect us from evil.

Through Christ our Lord

Amen

Day 1

What do you think are the key themes or ideas within Luke's gospel?

What do you know about your own Baptist (you were probably too young to remember it)?

Why do you think that your parents decide to baptize you?

Day 2

Why do you think Jesus asked John to baptize him, if John believes that he is not worthy enough to untie Jesus' sandals?

Day 3

What questions do you have about God or faith, and how can you explore them with **curiosity**?

What can you do this week to demonstrate that you are **active and curious** in everything that you do both at St. Joseph's and outside school?

Catholic Social Teaching - Dignity of Work and Participation

We respect the dignity of work and the rights of workers. Church teaching has upheld the dignity of work and participation. The human person should always come before the pursuit of profit. Workers have the right to join trade unions, to a just wage, to spend time with their families and to rest. Work is an essential part of our human dignity and everyone has the right to participate.

"It is essential that we continue to prioritise the goal of access to steady employment for everyone, no matter the limited interests of business and dubious economic reasoning" - Pope Francis

How this half term can you promote the Dignity of Work and Participation in all that you do in St Joseph's and society?