

The English-Speaking Roman Catholic Community on Gozo

Patron Saint—St. Thomas More
Our website: www.esccgozo.org

The Baptism of the Lord - C
12th January 2024
Celebrated by
Fr. George Debincat

Christ's baptism at the River Jordan reveals his identity as the beloved Son of God, calling believers to remember their own baptismal promises

First Reading Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low. Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm 103(104):1-4,24-25,27-30

(R) Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are.

Lord God, how great you are, clothed in majesty and glory, wrapped in light as in a robe! You stretch out the heavens like a tent.

(R) Above the rains you build your dwelling.

You make the clouds your chariot, you walk on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers and flashing fire your servant. **(R)**



Hymns for Today

"To sing is to pray twice"

575 On Jordan's Bank
477 Majesty, Worship His Majesty
914 Walk In The Light

How many are your works, O Lord!

In wisdom you have made them all.

The earth is full of your riches. There is the sea, vast and wide, with its moving swarms past counting, living things great and small. **(R)**

All of these look to you to give them their food in due season.

You give it, they gather it up: you open your hand, they have their fill. **(R)**

You hide your face, they are dismayed; you take back your spirit, they die. You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. **(R)**

Second Reading Titus 2:11-14,3:4-7

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself

for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

But when the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia Alleluia!
Someone is coming. Said John,
someone greater than I.
He will baptise you with the holy Spirit
and with fire
Alleluia

Gospel Luke 3:15-16,21-22

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Memorial Acclamation

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death O Lord, until you come again.

We Pray For...

Those in our community who need our prayers, and all our relatives and friends who are in need and those who have died

Commentaries on Today's Readings

After listening to today's readings pause now to consider the following

Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection. Luke does not tell us who baptised Jesus. In Luke the story of John the Baptist ends with his promise of one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit - then John is arrested. At the baptism itself all Luke's concentration is on the coming of the Spirit. Indeed, it is hardly an account of the baptism at all, for the baptism is only a time marker for the coming of the Spirit when "Jesus, after his own baptism, was at prayer". Jesus' mission begins with the coming of the Spirit. In the same way, Luke's second volume (the Acts of the Apostles) begins with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. It is as though Luke wants to show the importance of the Spirit from beginning to end of the Christian life. And this is the case: in both books the part played by the Spirit directs all the action. The same is still true in the Christian community today, though sometimes human stubbornness and blindness does its best to impede the leadership and guidance of the Spirit. Most of us are artists at blocking the Spirit when the Spirit's promptings are inconvenient! What does Luke's account of Jesus' baptism tell us about the Holy Spirit?

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for January

Let us pray for migrants, refugees, and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.

The collection for last Sunday was €212.91 All monies collected are deployed to cover the costs of running our community and for good causes



Sacred Heart Seminary Chapel Enrico Mizzi Street Victoria

(car park available on Sundays & Holy Days opposite Seminary)

Sunday Mass at 10.00 am

The Sacrament of Confession

is heard before Mass. Please allow time before Mass is due to commence

Our chaplain:

Father Loretu Tabone:

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PRAYER AT THE END OF MASS

As suggested by His Holiness, Pope Francis:

Holy Michael, Archangel, defend us in the day of battle: Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray: and do thou, Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust down to hell, Satan, and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.

DIARY DATES

- 9th Jan 2025 3.30 pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in English at Ghasri followed by refreshments
- 21st Jan 2025: 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm Bible Study Group in English at Santa Lucija Church .
- 26th Jan 2025 Community Lunch €16 Valley View. Booking form outside chapel

Readers Rota

12-Jan Readings	Johanna Marks	Prayers	Tom Welch
19-Jan Readings	Vince Vella	Prayers	Stella Woodgate
26-Jan Readings	Stella Woodgate	Prayers	Rachel Holland
02-Feb Readings	Rachel Holland	Prayers	Chris Holland
09-Feb Readings	Chris Holland	Prayers	Mary Newman
16-Feb Readings	Tom Welch	Prayers	Andy Young
23-Feb Readings	Andy Young	Prayers	Mary Newman

And from Fr. Robert Draper

There are optional readings for cycle C of the Lectionary alongside the account of the Baptism in Luke's gospel; but the readings proposed as normative do have the advantage of presenting the Baptism very much as an Epiphany to reinforce the message of last week's readings. The passage from Isaiah - part of the so-called 'Suffering Servant' texts - presents a messianic figure who is chosen and called and commissioned to bring salvation to both Jew and Gentile. It is this universalist aspect that makes this passage so appropriate for the season. As Peter reveals to Cornelius in the reading from Acts: 'God does not have favourites, but anybody ... who fears God and does what is right, is acceptable to him.' Like the other two 'Epiphanies' - that to the pagan Magi and at the wedding feast at Cana - the Baptism of the Lord offers a dramatic and public revelation of who Jesus is: 'You are my Son, the Beloved.' Christ's baptism is not for the forgiveness of sin, of course, as the Church's baptism is, it is a proclamation of the identity of Christ. But all Christian baptism also shares that - it is a public revelation that the baptised is now a beloved child, and that is the identity that matters. That is why Christian baptism should always be as public and visible as possible - it is a revelation of the true identity: a beloved daughter or son on whom God's favour rests - and that identity does not depend on anything other than God's choosing. That, of course, carries with it the commissioning that Isaiah makes explicit - to open eyes and free those who are captive. That work, which is the work of Christ the Beloved Son, is carried out through the many beloved sons and daughters who make up the body of the baptised.

Email to Fr. Loretu from Fr. Abraham Solomon from Ethiopia

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Next to my short greetings I would like to thank you and the English speaking community for the big gift of money 300 euro through Mr. Alan. I Fr. Abraham Solomon cm have received the money with many blessings and thanks from the bottom of my heart on behalf of Ethiopian poor, widows, orphan and homeless. Thank you for having me here. Please kindly ask you to pass my happiness and thanks to all English speaking community members. I will send the money to Fr. Ashenafi Jaleta who is parish priest and living bad place Dambi Dollo western Ethiopia for the mission. Nb: I kindly ask you all to pray for Ethiopia peoples that a good Lord give us peace. Pray for the poor, orphan, homeless, displaced that God continue to accompany and help them. God bless you