

www.sjti.ac.za/resources_homily.htm

First Reading: *Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11*
Response: **"Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are"** (Ps. 103:1)
Responsorial Psalm: *Psalm 103:1-4,24-25,27-30*
Second Reading: *Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7*
Gospel: *Luke 3:15-16,21-22.*

The ***Baptism of Our Lord*** is another epiphany, a manifestation, revelation of who is Jesus. He is the Risen Lord, come to redeem his people. He became one like us so that we may be one like him. We are redeemed and his work of redemption continues till the end of time.

Isaiah's call to the people in exile, prophetic of us in bondage to sin: "***Prepare a way for the Lord***" (*Is.40:3*). The greatest event is about to happen. The Messiah is coming.

This is a *kerygma*, proclamation of good news. The herald or prophet is to be a joyful messenger, to go up on a high mountain and shout "***Here is your God***" (*Is.40:9*).

The one who listens and recognizes the event will praise God. "***Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are***" (*Ps. 103:1*).

God's greatness is seen in his creation, as acclaimed in Psalm 103. "***You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth***" (*Ps. 103:30*).

God is not only the God of creation but the God of salvation, *Jeshuah*. Salvation is Jesus Christ, "***God's grace revealed and salvation made possible for the whole human race***" (*Titus 2:11*).

Paul reminds us that salvation also spells a commitment on the part of the Christian, to "***give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions***" (*Titus 2:12*).

Salvation, *Jeshuah*, involves a baptism, where "***heaven is opened and the Holy Spirit comes down***" and the voice of God, *Qol Yahweh*, says "***You are my beloved Son***," child of God, (*Lk. 3:22*). This is what happens at the Baptism of all who are saved.

Through baptism we are born again, becoming children of God. We become like Christ, Christened.

Reflect upon the baptismal scene of Christ in the Jordan (*Lk.3:21-22*) (***Scripture***)

See the Rites of Baptism in the Church. Look at the words and actions. (***Liturgy***)

Study what the Church says about the role and importance of Baptism. (***Teaching***)

Follow up a New Year resolution on becoming a more committed Christian. (***Witness***)

FOR THE CHILDREN

Read about the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. *Gospel*

Ask children if they have seen a baptism. Discuss what is seen and not seen. *Baptism Rite*.

Give explanation and *Teaching* on what is Baptism and all it implies.

Witness by making a commitment on how to become a better Christian this year.

FOR TEENAGERS (*Christian Praxis*)

- Name the Present Action:** *What is your understanding of baptism?*
- Your Story and Vision:** *What does it mean to you and what should it mean?*
- Church's Story and Vision:** *The teacher here gives a teaching on Baptism.*
- Yours and Church's Vision:** *Work with the Church in living out of your baptism and for the building of the Kingdom of God.*

RCIA

Reflect on the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and the significance of our Baptism. Study the catechisms of the Church on the teachings of this important and first of the seven sacraments.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I was baptizing a child that was about two years old. The child resisted and was shouting and swearing, as his parents held him over the font. After the service, the embarrassed parents apologized, saying they did not know where the child learned to use foul language. It seemed to have come naturally to the child. Was it from his environment? Baptism is a challenge to the parents to bring up their child as a Christian, to speak properly, know the language of God, prayer, and as the sage says, "enter the gate of heaven without clinging to earth." (i)

(i) LAO-TZU. *Tao Te Ching*. Transl. **Stephen Addiss** and **Stanley Lombardo**. Shambala. Boston & London. 2007. p.10

LITTLE ANGELINA

The family discussed how the Christmas season ends with the Feast of Our Lord's Baptism. "Why?" asked Angelina. "Because Jesus, no longer a little child, as an adult begins his ministry. Angelina was pleased, she thought it was a good idea to let her Christmas season last as well until she grew up.

IMPORTANT WORD: *Baptism, Baptismum, Βαπτισμα, טבילה (Tebilah)*

The **Baptism of Our Lord**, is an *Epiphany, a manifestation or revelation* of who is Jesus. It happens after thirty years of Jesus' hidden growth and heralds the beginning of his public life. Jesus descending into the Jordan is like entering into the waters of fallen humanity and doing all that righteousness demands by washing away our sins. Even though he was sinless, he identified with Israel's situation and leads all up through the waters to new life and salvation, where we will with angels sing - "*quos decantibimus et nos et angeli.*" (i)

Baptism is the sacrament for entering into the Kingdom of God. The ritual developed from an old custom of cleansing, involving a specific washing (*baptismum*), or *tebilah*, meaning in Hebrew, immersion.

(i) ABELARD Peter: *Sabbato ad Vesperas*. Trans. by Helen Weddell from *The Hymns of Abelard*. Penguin Books UK. 1974

Watchword: "*You are my beloved Son*" (Lk.3:22)

- Hebrew: **אתה בני יד ידי** *Attah beni yedidi*
- Greek: **Συ ει ο υιος μου ο αγαπητος.** *Su ei huiois ho agapetos*
- Latin: **Tu es Filius meus dilectus.**
- Spanish: **Tu eres mi Hijo amado.**
- Portuguese: **Tu es o meu Filho amado.**
- French: **Tu es mon Fils bien-aimé.**
- German: **Du bist mein lieber Sohn.**
- Afrikaans: **Jy is my geliefde Seun.**
- Zulu: **Wena uyiNdodana yami ethandekayo.**
- Xhosa: **UngNyana wam endimthandayo wena.**
- Sotho: **O Mora wa ka eo ke mo ratang.**
- Irish: **Is tu mo Mhac muirneach**