

Baptism of the Lord – 12th January 2025

Headings	Gospel (Luke 3:15-16.21-22)	First Reading (Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11)	Second Reading (Titus 2:11-14;3:4-7)
Context	The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord closes the Christmas season and opens it outward into Ordinary time. When Jesus is baptised by John in the Jordan something enormous happens. The heavens are torn open, the Fathers voice is heard and the Spirit is seen coming down in physical form upon Jesus.	Isaiah was a remarkable prophet and man of God who lived in Jerusalem. Little is known about his life except what filters through the book that bears his name. It is assumed he was a member of the Jerusalem nobility.	Titus is believed to have been a gentile converted to Christianity by Paul. He was consecrated as bishop of the island of Crete, an island known to be in a deplorable moral state. He was a faithful worker who accompanied Paul on his journeys.
Key verse	“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 baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”	“Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem” “Here is your God”	“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”
Key themes/ messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus’ public life begins with his baptism by John in the Jordan. • The large crowd, were starting to believe John himself was the Messiah. • John said he was not the Messiah but that a greater one was coming. He was clearly pointing to Jesus, the messiah who was promised • The Baptism of Jesus is for him the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God’s suffering servant. • He allows himself to be numbered among sinners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isaiah uses the image of preparing a straight path for the Lord. They are to prepare spiritually for their return to their own land. • The Prophet gives a message of hope that the people will be freed from slavery. • This is a joyful message that deserves to be shouted aloud for all to hear. • The promised one would be like a shepherd feeding his flock. The prophet is pointing to the coming of Jesus, the Good Shepherd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul contrasts people who live good lives with those who follow worldly ambitions. He encourages us to live good lives while we are waiting for the Lord’s return. • We are saved by Baptism (the cleansing water of rebirth). The result is we can look forward with confidence to eternal life. • God did all this out of his own generosity, not because we deserved it. • Out of his generosity God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit • To cleanse and renew us so that we can live a new life. • By his death and resurrection Jesus has freed us so that we can Become like him.
Questions/ application to our lives	In today’s Gospel can you see a link between the Baptism of Jesus and our baptism? How often do you reflect on the meaning of your baptism? As followers of Christ how are we linked into the mission of Jesus through our baptism?	How often have you been told of your responsibility as a Catholic to announce the Gospel of the Lord? What have you done in response? What do you think your role is in evangelising others?	Paul says that we should live good and religious lives in this present world. How are you helped to do this? How would you explain what Paul means by “ the grace of God” in this passage? How would you explain the depth of Gods’ generosity to a friend who enquires what it means?
Further reading	<i>Catechism 535 -537, 1223 -1225</i>	<i>Catechism 919</i>	<i>Catechism 153 -155, 1810, 1996, 1998,</i>