



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2021

(LEC. 21)  
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD - FEAST

1. ISAIAH 42:1-4, 6-7
2. ACTS 10:34-38
3. MARK 1:7-11

GOSPEL RELATED: CCC 151, 422

**FOCUS:** BAPTISM CLEANSSES AND PREPARES US FOR LIFE IN CHRIST THROUGH THE ACTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Today in our Gospel reading, John the Baptist states in relation to Jesus: *One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.* This is the scriptural foundation of our Christian baptism.

John was a humble man. He knew that he was not the Messiah, but he also knew that he was called to prepare the way for him. He baptized the people in water, so that Jesus could fully baptize them with fire and the Holy Spirit.

The Church is born in baptism. In baptism, we are forgiven for all sins: original (and actual in the case of an adult catechumen). We are adopted into the family of God, and given sanctifying grace to live and grow in holiness. We are marked as Christ's own forever, and called to a life of holiness.

The tremendous blessing of this sacrament includes its grafting of each one of us to Christ, and its outpouring of the Holy Spirit into us such that we are then disposed to receive additional graces and blessings throughout our lives. These graces assist us in our journey to our final goal – union with Christ in eternity. Baptism cleanses and prepares us for life in Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The calling and dignity given to us in baptism is not lost even if we turn away from the grace and blessings. This is why we never “re-baptize” someone who has fallen away and then returns to the Church. While baptism does not guarantee that a person will go to heaven after they die, it does mark them for Christ in a way that cannot be erased.

John prepared people with water baptism. Jesus gave them life and the Holy Spirit. Our baptism is the first step in our lives as People of God. We are cleansed and marked, so that we can be filled with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit and be used for God's glory. It is the beginning of our journey with, and to, Christ. It is the foundation of the other sacraments we receive, and it is by this sacrament that we participate in the full life of the Church. Our goal is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Only in baptism do we receive the grace that makes that journey possible.

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