

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

The Baptism of the Lord (A)

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 • Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10 • Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17

Beloved Sons and Daughters

At the Jordan River, Jesus humbly steps into the waters and inaugurates his public ministry. Though **sinless**, he chooses to be baptized by John at the lowest place on the earth in order to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15), identifying himself with the people he came to save. In this moment, the heavens are opened, the Spirit descends upon him, and the Father’s voice declares his delight in the beloved Son.

What unfolds at the Jordan reveals not only who Jesus is, but also who we are in him. Through baptism, we are cleansed of sin, incorporated into the Church, and adopted as sons and daughters of God. At Confirmation, we receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, strengthening us to live as bold witnesses of the Gospel. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, God’s “plan of sheer goodness” is to gather his children into his family, so that we may share in his blessed life (CCC 1).

The baptism of Jesus, then, is both revelation and commissioning. Just as the Father’s voice proclaimed Jesus as the beloved Son, so too does it speak over us in baptism: “You are my beloved child.” And just as Jesus was sent forth from the Jordan to bring healing and proclaim the Kingdom, so too are we sent into the world, equipped by the Spirit, to manifest the love and mercy of God.

Living the Gospel

The Baptism of the Lord reminds us that our faith is not passive but missionary. As Christ rose from the Jordan and began his ministry, we are sent forth from our baptism and confirmation to proclaim the Kingdom of God. This week, take concrete steps to live your baptismal call: Make the Sign of the Cross with renewed reverence, recall your confirmation by asking the Spirit to guide your words and actions, and be attentive to opportunities to share the Gospel. Remember, the same Spirit who descended on Jesus rests upon you.

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0ktDObo0Og>

Ponder and Pray

» In your baptism, God claimed you as his own beloved son or daughter. How consciously do you live out that identity today? In what moments do you forget or doubt it, and how can you begin to root your sense of worth more firmly in being a child of God?

» In Baptism and Confirmation, you were anointed with the Holy Spirit and sent on mission. Where in your life is the Lord calling you to be his witness? With your family, in your workplace, or in your community? Do you trust that the Spirit will give you the words and courage you need?

» Jesus began his ministry in the lowest place on earth, reminding us that God's grace enters the depths of human need. Where are the "low places" in your life, or in the lives of those around you, that you need to invite Christ into so that his Spirit can bring healing and renewal?

“

What has happened all over Judea, ... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

”

—Acts 10:37–38

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write about anything related to today's Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins's reflection, your priest's homily, your answers to the questions on this page—whatever will help you and your household get the most out of today's celebration.

Jeff Cavins is the author of *The Bible Timeline: The Story of Salvation* and the creator of the video series *Sundays with Ascension*, from which this reflection was adapted.

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