

## The Baptism of the Lord

### Gospel Reading *Matthew 3:13-17*

**The Spirit of God comes upon Jesus as he is baptised by John.**

### Reflection on the Gospel Reading

The baptism of Jesus is attested to in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The account that appears in Matthew is the only one to include the dialogue between Jesus and John, however. Another difference in Matthew's presentation of this event is the announcement made by the voice from heaven, which says, "This is my beloved son . . ." In Mark and Luke, this voice addresses itself to Jesus: "You are my beloved son . . ."

The baptisms that John performs prefigure Christian Baptism. John baptises for repentance from sin. In accepting this baptism, Jesus unites himself with all sinners even though he is sinless. In Matthew's Gospel, John the Baptist distinguishes his practice of baptism from the Baptism that the Messiah brings: "I am baptising you with water . . . He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11).

The baptism of Jesus is another manifestation of Christ, another

epiphany. Christ's baptism inaugurates his mission. In an analogous way, our Baptism inaugurates our mission as Christians.

This Sunday marks a transition from the Christmas season to Ordinary Time. In a way, today's feast is the high point of the Christmas season. Before Jesus' birth, angels announced to Mary and to Joseph who Jesus would be. At his birth, the shepherds and the Magi recognise Jesus as the Messiah. At his baptism, Jesus accepts that he is God's son and inaugurates that mission.

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