



12 JANUARY 2025

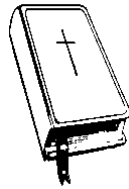
**ALEXANDRA
CATHOLIC
PASTORAL AREA**
[St John the Baptist
(1924) Alexandra;
St Peter's
(1928) Omakau;
St Dunstan's
(1903) Clyde;
St Patrick's
(1892) St Bathans;
Our Lady of Peace
(1910) Roxburgh]

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

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SCRIPTURE READINGS THIS SUNDAY

(1) *Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11.* The people of Israel spent from about 600 B.C.E. to 540 B.C.E. in exile, as captives of the Babylonians. The second part of the book of Isaiah, chapters 40-55, prophesies the end of this Exile and the return of the captives to their homeland.



(2) *Titus 2:11-14,3:4-7.* Among those served by the early bishop Titus were Christians who believed they first had to be Jewish, and they tried to impose Jewish laws on pagan converts to Christ. Paul reminds them that God saved us "not because of any righteous deeds we had done, but because of His mercy."

(3) *Luke 3:15-16,21-22.* The Heavenly Father is much pleased with his Son's humble submission and speaks audibly and directly to him for all to hear: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit, too, is present - "and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, like a dove" - as Jesus submits to John's baptism. The Holy Spirit anoints Jesus for his ministry which begins that day as Jesus rises from the waters of the Jordan River and is driven by the Spirit into the desert for 40 days and nights of fasting and prayer, as a preparation for the start of his Messianic mission.

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END OF CHRISTMAS SEASON, START OF ORDINARY TIME:

This Sunday marks the end of the Christmas season, after which the Church cycle of readings and liturgical emphases enters what is termed 'Ordinary Time' (i.e. the weeks of the year outside of the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost).

The lectionary (the book of scheduled Mass readings) is arranged so that most of the Bible can be read and heard over a three year period, termed Year A, Year B, and Year C. e.g. Over 2025 the cycle of readings for Year C are focused upon. With regard to the Gospels, Year A focuses on the Gospel

of Matthew, Year B on those of Mark, and Year C on those of Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed across the three year period, particularly around the Easter season.

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS (The second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C): (1) *Isaiah 62:1-5* (2) *1 Corinthians 12:4-11* (3) *John 2:1-11*
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Died Recently: Jimmy Grieve (Cromwell); Geoff Williamson (Wanaka).
Anniversaries: Angelo Pessione.
'May they rest in peace.'

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THE LORD'S BAPTISM (Extract from a sermon by St Maximus of Turin, c. 380 – c. 465):

'Reason demands that this feast of the Lord's baptism, which I think could be called the feast of his birthday, should follow soon after the celebration of his physical birthday, within the Christmas season, even though many years intervened between the two events. At Christmas he was born a man; today he is reborn sacramentally. Then he was born from the Virgin; today he is born in mystery. When he was born a man, his mother Mary held him close to her heart; when he is born in mystery, God the Father embraces him with his voice when he says: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: listen to him.* The mother caresses the tender baby on her lap; the Father serves his Son by his loving testimony. The mother holds the child for the Magi to adore; the Father reveals that his Son is to be worshipped by all the nations. That is why the Lord Jesus went to the river for baptism.'

Someone might ask, "Why would a holy man desire baptism?" Listen to the answer: Christ is baptized, not to be made holy by the water, but to make the water holy, and by his cleansing to purify the waters which he touched. For the consecration of Christ involves a more significant consecration of the water. For when the Saviour is washed, all water is made suitable for the dispensing of baptismal grace to the people of future ages. Christ is the first to be baptized, then, so that Christians will follow after him with confidence.'

VATICAN NEWS (www.vaticannews.va): (NB: For those receiving emailed digital copies, clicking on the headings below gives Internet access to the full article.)

Pope dedicates catechesis to 'scourge' of child labour. Pope Francis dedicates his General Audience reflection to the "scourge" of child labour, saying Christians "cannot remain indifferent," when children, "instead of being loved and protected, are robbed of their childhood, of their dreams, [and made] victims of exploitation and marginalization."

Pontifical Mission marks 75 years of caring for those in need in Middle East. The Little Sisters

