

THE LIVING
WORD
OF
EPIPHANY

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

January 8 - January 14

EPIPHANY

Baptism of the Lord

This week, the Church transitions out of the Christmas season into Epiphany. Epiphany is both a day (January 6) and a season. Epiphany comes from a Greek word that means “to reveal.” In Epiphany, we celebrate and honor the revelation, or revealing, of Jesus as the Son of God and Light of the world.

In this week’s Sunday Gospel reading, Matthew 3:13-17, Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist. Despite John’s reluctance to baptize him, Jesus tells John that the act of baptism is the fulfillment of righteousness. As Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and the voice of God the Father declares Jesus to be his Beloved Son. As you read Psalm 29 this week, pay attention to the way the Lord thunders over the waters. On this occasion, the voice thunders the identity of the Son and the delight he brings.

Christian scholars have attempted for some time to understand why Jesus was baptized. Some have suggested that it was the fulfillment of righteousness and obedience to the Father’s plan. Others have highlighted the way Jesus identified with sinners. Some have suggested that it was a priestly act that inaugurated his public ministry. Each of these would appear to be faithful facets of his baptism.

What we must not miss in the baptism is not just what Jesus “did” in the waters, but the “epiphany” that was gifted to humanity. This Jesus who came from Galilee into the Jordan River with John is no regular human being. Of course, he is fully human, true flesh and blood. But upon entering the water, he is anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit and declared to be the Father’s Beloved Son.

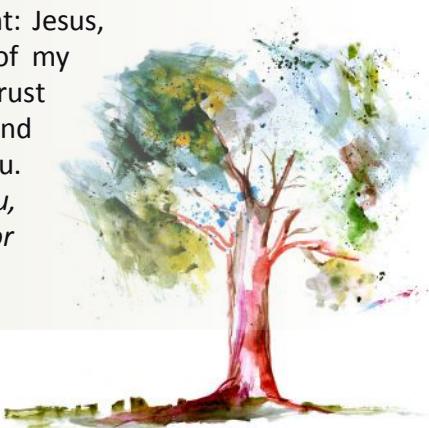
The baptism of Jesus reveals the identity of this heaven-approved Messiah who will undertake the salvation of the world. This is Immanuel, God with us; Jesus, the one who will save his people from our sins. And this is the first moment we hear the Heavenly Father speak a word about the Son. We have heard the testimony of the angels, the reports of the Eastern magi, and even the preaching of John the Baptist. But in the baptism, heaven speaks a clear word that fixes our focus on the Son of God, Jesus.

In the majority of the readings this week, you will see a common theme that the Messiah will be a light for the nations. Notice the common thread of this revelation to the nations running through the readings in Isaiah 42, the selections from Acts, Genesis 35, Jeremiah 1, Isaiah 51, and finally, Matthew 12. Jesus the Messiah will not just be a light for Israel; he will be a light to the nations. His salvation will extend to all of creation, through all history.

And that means, that as you sit reading this in the 21st century, Jesus is the Light for your salvation. The Father wants you to hear afresh that you must turn your eyes upon his beloved Son. He is a gift to you, and for you—the only means of your salvation.

FOR reflection

Take a few minutes, each day if possible, to sit quietly with this thought: Jesus, the Beloved Son, is the gift of my salvation. Receive the gift. Trust in him. Rest in the grace and forgiveness God offers to you. Give thanks, saying, *“Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for rescuing me. Amen.”*





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday	Psalm 29; 1 Samuel 3:1-9; Acts 9:1-9
Friday	Psalm 29; 1 Samuel 3:10-4:1a; Acts 9:10-19a
Saturday	Psalm 29; 1 Samuel 7:3-17; Acts 9:19b-31
Sunday	Psalm 29; Isaiah 42:1-9; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
Monday	Psalm 89:5-37; Genesis 35:1-15; Acts 10:44-48
Tuesday	Psalm 89:5-37; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Acts 8:4-13
Wednesday	Psalm 89:5-37; Isaiah 51:1-16; Matthew 12:15-21

Why do the daily readings begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Isaiah 60:1-3

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading (read Psalm and Gospel text here)

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

O God, by the leading of a star you manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Blessed Savior, at this hour you hung upon the cross, stretching out your loving arms. Grant that all the peoples of the earth may look to you and be saved; for your mercies' sake. *Amen.*

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name.

Amen.

*Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all
snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell
with us to preserve us in peace; and
let your blessing be upon us always;
through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
*Amen.**



