



Sunday Readings

13th January 2019 - The Baptism of the Lord.

FIRST READING

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11.

'Console my people, console them' says your God.
'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.'

A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low. Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'
Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.'

Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Ps. 103:1-2. 3-4. 24-25. 27-30. R/. v.1.

R/. Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are.

Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a robe!
You stretch out the heavens like a tent. **R/.**

Above the rains you build your dwelling.
You make the clouds your chariot,
you walk on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers
and flashing fire your servant. **R/.**

How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.
There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small. **R/.**

All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.
You give it, they gather it up:
you open your hand, they have their fill. **R/.**

You take back your spirit, they die;
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul
to Titus 2: 11-14. 3:4-7

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own *and* would have no ambition except to do good.

But when the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Luke 3:15-16. 21-22

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



The Baptism of the Lord - 13th January 2019

the word of god

saint of the week

“I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Thursday 17 January 2019

St Anthony, Abbot (251 - 356)



Because we live in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the power of our baptism, we are always orientated to the future, to the coming Kingdom. It's a difficult thought, for it is hard to imagine the future as keenly as we can imagine the past, but we have a lot of help. We have the Spirit of God, leading us on, the Spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. We have the

picture of the Kingdom that is the mass, a vision of a world without conflict and pain, a world in which all are reconciled. We have the power of the Holy Trinity pulling us on to a glorious future. We just have to step, not back, but forward to be lifted into a future that is a glorious affirmation of all that it is to be human under God. We just need to take that step, not back, but forward.

It helps us to remember that the future is where God's promises are, the God who is reconciling all things to himself and who is bringing all things to fulfilment. All things are getting better, even if that process is far from clear to us now and, of course, we have to remember that as we are not there yet, we, and those around us are not yet perfect.



St Anthony is the originator of the monastic life. He was born in Egypt: when his parents died, he listened to the words of the Gospel and gave all his belongings to the poor. He went out into the wilderness to begin a life of penitence, living in absolute poverty, praying, meditating, and supporting himself

by manual work. He suffered many temptations, both physical and spiritual, but he overcame them. Disciples gathered round him, attracted by his wisdom, moderation, and holiness. He gave support to the victims of the persecutions of Diocletian, and helping St Athanasius in his fight against the Arians. He lived to be over a hundred years old, and died in 356.

The Gospels are full of wise sayings of Jesus that seem to be ignored, and one of the most poignant of these was in his meeting with that young man who asked over and over again, insistently, “What must I do to have eternal life?.” When, in the end, Jesus told him that if he wanted to be *perfect* he would have to sell all that he had and give the money to the poor, the young man went away, sorrowing; because he was very rich. What could be more of a waste than that? You tell someone what he has to do, and he is afraid to do it. And yet... 250 years later, St Antony hears the story, and does give away all that he has, and becomes the founder of monasticism. And then again, over 1,000 years later, St Francis of Assisi hears the story, and gives away his possessions (and some of his father's) and revolutionises Christianity again.

Not all the words that we speak are forgotten, even though we cannot see their effects ourselves. Let us pray that those unknown effects may always be good ones.

St Anthony is the Patron Saint of animals and farmers.

prayer of the week

A Prayer for God's Grace

Oh my God, You know my weakness and failings, and that without Your help I can accomplish nothing for the good of souls, my own and others'. Grant me, therefore, the help of Your grace. Grant it according to my particular needs this day. Enable me to see the task You will set before me in the daily routine of my life, and help me work hard at my appointed tasks. Teach me to bear patiently all the trials of suffering or failure that may come to me today. Amen.