

**Thought for the week**  
**Baptism of the Lord**  
**9th January 2022**

Loving God,  
Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,  
you created us in your own image and  
made us stewards of creation.  
You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land  
so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,  
so that we may attend to your gift of creation  
Help us to be conscious that our common home  
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures  
and to all future generations,  
and that it is our responsibility to preserve it.  
May we help each person secure the food and resources  
that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,  
especially the poorest and those most at risk  
of being left behind.  
Transform our fear and feelings of isolation  
into hope and fraternity  
so that we may experience a true conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity  
in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic.  
Make us courageous to embrace the changes  
that are needed in search of the common good.  
Now more than ever may we feel  
that we are all interconnected and interdependent.  
Enable us to listen and respond  
to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.  
May the present sufferings be the birth pangs  
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.

Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,  
we make this prayer through Christ Our Lord.  
Amen.

*'God's grace [...] has made salvation possible for the whole human race.'*

It can be quite hard for us to reconcile the facts that when Our Lord walked this earth, He was both completely man and completely God. The many miracles He worked proved His supreme Godhead, something we also see in today's psalm, a paean to the Almighty – *'Lord God, how great you are'*.

And yet, the very real sufferings Jesus endured proved His humanity with all its frailties - not just during His Passion; remember also His very human reaction to the death of His friend Lazarus, giving us the shortest verse in the Bible: *'Jesus wept.'* (Jn 11:35).

His Baptism by John in the River Jordan was one of those occasions when Our Lord behaved in His 'human' state if I can describe it like that. Clearly there was no need for the Son of God to be baptised! It is in the Gospel of St Matthew we read that the Baptist felt unworthy to carry out this action saying instead that, *'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'*. It's almost as if Our Lord was leading by example, while also receiving the powerful and loving endorsement of His Father and the strength of the Holy Spirit.

The message is clear: the teachings of the Son of God have the seal of authority from the Father. They are the means of our salvation and the vivifying water of baptism cleanses our soul to make it more receptive to those teachings. The stain of original sin is removed and we have the opportunity to start afresh. Although we stumble and fall repeatedly, we have endless chances to start again via the Sacrament of Reconciliation – such is God's love for us. It is consoling to know that salvation is possible for us all and that what we have to do *'is to give up everything that does not lead to God'* (Titus 2:11).

Perhaps it is time for those New Year resolutions to focus on the health of our soul...



**We ask you to please pray for the following people who continue to ask for your prayers;**

Please pray for Beth Selwood

Please pray for Mary Haggar

Please pray for Vivien Kear (Krissie's friend) who has cancer

Please pray for Rita Lonsdale.

Maddy Sharman has asked for our prayers.

Vera Bird has asked for our prayers for her Great, Great Grandson Harry

Please pray for Cecilia Fung, the mother of Fr Jojo. She has had a stroke.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has long covid.

Please pray for Caroline Mikhail (daughter - in - law of Jane and Ramsay Mikhail) who suffered a stroke.

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for Jean's great grandson Rogan who is 9 and has leukemia. Rogan continues to need our prayers.

Please pray for the children and teachers of the Parish

Please pray for the residents and staff at the two nursing homes in our parish, Abbeycrest and St Luke's.

Please pray for all victims of the Coronavirus.

**Please also remember in your prayers those whose**



**anniversaries occur at this time including;**

Doug Buck, Kieran Cotter, Lucy Emma Disouza, Delcia Rose Ingram, Patrick O'Sullivan, Constantino Antao, Thomas Stewart, Charles Harris, Sheila Stone, Willem Anschutz, Sylvester Cottrel (snr), James Creighton, Eirlys Godfrey, Keng Leow, Jan Manning,