



# Bible Study – The Baptism of The Lord Year C

St. Maria Goretti, St. Augustine, Blessed Sacrament / St. Joan of Arc, and St. Peter Claver Parishes  
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**“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” Lk. 3:22**

## Reading I: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

**EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT!** As we begin this New Year, these assuring words should calm our anxieties and fears. During the Seasons of Advent and Christmas, we prepared for and received the light of Christ’s presence within us. Empowered by his presence, we are assured that God is with US as we start this year seeking a deeper personal relationship Him.

What will this year be like? What challenges will I face? These questions are born in anxiety and fear of the unknown. Such anxiety and doubt are replaced with the confidence in the Creator that our salvation has been secured in spite of our faults. Through the mercy of God our future is assured. How do we know? God sent His Son to dwell among us. In solidarity with us, He accepted human suffering and the baptism of sinners. In doing so He assured us that “everything will be all right.”

In the first reading, we reflect on the



**Everything Will Be All Right!**

“*Servant Song*” of second-Isaiah (*Isa. 40-55*), which describes the Servant Messiah as revealed to Isaiah. The eleven verses in the first reading, (**vv. 1-11**) serve as an introduction to all of Second Isaiah. They give the occasion of the Oracle which is the liberation of Israel (**v. 1**). The word *comfort* used in this context has the sense of breathing freely. This could be a reference to the *Holy Comforter*, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. God assures His people that they can relax, because their captivity has come to an end. Historically, around 538 B.C., Cyrus of Persia had won his preliminary victories and the power of Babylon was weakening. Therefore, God gave comfort to His people and in turn, the people gave comfort to each other by spreading the good news of their release (**v. 2**). The reference that Israel has suffered double for her sins may reflect that all of Israel’s suffering was not punishment. Using images of filling valleys and lowering hills and mountains, verses 3-11 reflect a second Exodus. The message is one of great comfort, to take a breath and relax. It’s going to be alright, because God has spoken. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** What do you fear most this year? Why? Where will you find confidence to face the future?

**TITUS**  
Titus was a "partner and fellow worker" (2 Cor 8:23) of the apostle Paul. Although Titus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, Paul's letters reveal that he was the man of the hour at a number of key points in Paul's life. Paul first mentions Titus in Gal 2:1-3. As an uncircumcised Gentile, Titus accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem as a living example of a great theological truth: Gentiles need not be circumcised in order to be saved. He was a man for the tough tasks. He was dependable (2 Cor 8:17), reliable (2 Cor 7:6), and diligent (2 Cor 8:17).  
*Titus - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers;*

## Reading II: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

**EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT!**  
“Pressure, pressure, I can’t stand the pressure.” The pressure to return to work or school after a vacation, the uncertainty of presidential inertia, a chronic national focus on division, uncertain national economy and personal financial instability make for anxious times.

In his letter to Titus, who was charged with establishing a church on the Greek Island of Crete, St. Paul provided comfort, (See first reading) together with cogent instructions on Christian living. He assured Titus that even though his task appeared to be daunting, he would succeed if he preached sound doctrine. (**Ti. 2:1**).

In verses 11-15 St. Paul applied faith to moral living. He proclaimed that *Grace* trains us to reject godless ways and to live justly and devoutly in this age. (**vv. 11, 12-13**) He reminded Titus, as he reminds us, that God appeared in our history to save all people through Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by His sacrifice. Having been washed in the Blood of the Lamb, we await His glorious return. Because we were redeemed from lawlessness and cleansed from sin, we are eager to do what is good and right (**v. 14**). This point is emphasized in Titus 3:8, where St. Paul advised Titus that he is to insist on the standards of righteous conduct, because it was God’s mercy, poured out through Jesus Christ that redeemed us. Following the Word of God makes everything alright. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How can you show that you are eager to do what is right?

**GOSPEL: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22**

**EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT!**

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine; Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine." These lyrics by Fanny Jane Cosby have provided comfort to many for almost two centuries. Blessed Assurance is being free from doubt and uncertainty that the penalty for sin has been paid and heaven has been secured as our eternal destiny. It is in this sense that John the Baptist might have tried to calm the anxieties of those who were expecting the Christ. As the people were filled with expectation and wondering if John could be the "anointed one", he comforted their expectations and anxiety by pointing to Jesus. He assured them that the Messiah was among them and that everything would be all right.

St. Luke places John the Baptist preaching and baptizing in the Jordan in Chapter 3:1-22. People from all over the country flocked to him. Some of the men from Galilee were his disciples, Andrew definitely, and probably John and possibly Peter and Phillip (Jn. 1:35-45). The Old Testament prophets had long predicted that a king and liberator would arrive to deliver Israel. Unfortunately, most sought a political, rather than a spiritual leader. The word Messiah means anointed, because He was to be priest, prophet and king. Those who assumed such offices were anointed with oil. The Greek word for anointed is *Christos*, from which comes the English word, Christ.

John the Baptist denies that he is the Christ. But he comforts those seeking the Messiah by pointing to Jesus, who will baptize with fire and Spirit (v. 16). John's baptism was a symbol representing interior conversion from worldliness. The Baptism that Jesus gives is not a symbol. Fire signifies purification and the presence of God. (Num. 31:23; Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:2, Mat. 3:14) The Holy Spirit provides the grace, friendship, and relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is the comforter who says it will be all right. (See the first reading Isa. 40:1)

The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in bodily form, as a spectacular description of what was taking place. God had become man. Jesus, though sinless, took the form of a sinner to show us what God wants from us - a personal relationship. Jesus received the fullness of divine assurance. Also notice that He received the divine assurance, after He had been baptized and while he was praying. (v. 21) Jesus gives us an example of what we must do. Once baptized into His grace, we must remain obedient to God and constant in prayer. In this way, we are assured that salvation is secured and that everything will be all right. DISCUSSION QUESTION: How is the term "Blessed Assurance" related to Baptism?

**Pray About It!**

**Monday**

Read Isaiah 40:1-5. Speak words of comfort to someone today.

**Tuesday**

Read Titus 2:11-14. Perform one act of kindness to a stranger.

**Wednesday**

Make a donation to the St. Vincent De Paul Food Bank.

**Thursday**

Read Jn. 14:23. Spend ten minutes in silent prayer seeking God's purpose for you this year.

**Friday**

Read Luke 3: 15-22. Renew your Baptism Promises.

**THE BAPTISM OF JESUS  
CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**536** The baptism of Jesus is on his part the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's suffering Servant. He allows himself to be numbered among sinners; he is already "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Already he is anticipating the "baptism" of his bloody death. Already he is coming to "fulfill all righteousness," that is, he is submitting himself entirely to his Father's will: out of love he consents to this baptism of death for the remission of our sins. The Father's voice responds to the Son's acceptance, proclaiming his entire delight in his Son. The Spirit whom Jesus possessed in fullness from his conception comes to "rest on him." Jesus will be the source of the Spirit for all mankind. At his baptism "the heavens were opened"—the heavens that Adam's sin had closed—and the waters were sanctified by the descent of Jesus and the Spirit, a prelude to the new creation.

**Resources:** Titus - Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers; The Sunday Readings Cycle C Kevin O'Sullivan, OF.M. Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Quincy, Ill. pp. 68-70; Luke - Jerome Kodell, O.S.B. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament*. The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn. pp 994; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year C 2016, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 38-41; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what->

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