

not with water only, but with water and blood; with the Spirit as another witness - since the Spirit is the truth - so that there are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood, and all three of them agree.

We accept the testimony of human witnesses, but God's testimony is much greater, and this is God's testimony, given as evidence for his Son.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation Mk 9.8

Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens were opened and the Father's voice was heard: this is my beloved Son, hear him. Alleluia!

Gospel 1:7-11

The holy Gospel according to Mark

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

St Michael's Parish Contacts

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Fr Leo Duck, <i>Resident in Vincentia</i>	4441 5571
Fr Ronan Kilgannon, <i>Resident in Kangaroo Valley</i>	
Mr Duane Fernandez, <i>Seminarian</i>	4423 1712
Mrs Robbie Forsythe, <i>Secretary</i>	4423 1712
Sr Margaret Prendergast sgs	4421 2260
Sr Patricia Lawless sgs	4421 2260
Sr Val Green rsc	4441 7035
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Reflection

by Dianne Bergant CSA

With this feast, the Christmas cycle comes to a close. It expands the universality of God's presence proclaimed on the Epiphany and locates it in the messianic mission of Jesus established at his baptism.

Water is a rich symbol. Essential for life, it represents fertility and bounteous prosperity. It possesses the mysterious ability to transform the barren desert into a luxurious carpet of blossoms. It refreshes and nourishes; it is the source of life; it is life itself. Water is also a symbol of the spiritual life. It issues from some hidden wellhead in God, and it gushes forth as a fountain of refreshment and regeneration. The messianic age, a time of well-being and complete fulfilment, is envisioned as a time of feasting on the fruits of a fertile and productive land, a land that resembles a well-watered garden.

The baptism of Jesus was an event that marked him as the Son of God. But how could this be confirmed? Who but God could authenticate such a claim? And God did authenticate it! The heavens were torn apart; the Spirit descended upon Jesus; the voice of God acclaimed him 'Son'. A similar testimony confirms Jesus' divine sonship - the Spirit, the water and the blood. These witnesses now testify to his victory over death and the glory of his resurrected life.

Gospel experiences

Fr Richard Leonard SJ

A very drunk man stumbles upon the local Baptist minister conducting his Sunday service down by the river. He proceeds to venture into the water and stand next to the minister.

The minister turns, notices the man and says, 'Mister, are you ready to find Jesus?' The man looks back and says, 'Yes Reverend, I am.'

The minister then dunks the fellow under the water and pulls him right back up. 'Have you found Jesus?' the minister asks. 'No, I didn't!' replies the man.

The minister then dunks him under for quite a bit longer, brings him up and says, 'Now brother, have you found Jesus?' 'No, I did not!' says the drunken man again.

Disgusted, the minister holds the man under for at least thirty seconds this time, brings him up and demands, 'For the grace of God, have you found Jesus yet?'

The man wipes his eyes and pleads, 'Are you sure this is where he fell in?'

Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

nowraparish.org.au

The Baptism of the Lord

11 January 2009

First Reading 55.1-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come! Buy corn without money, and eat, and, at no cost, wine and milk. Why spend money on what is not bread, your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live. With you I will make an everlasting covenant out of the favours promised to David.

See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples, a leader and a master of the nations. See, you will summon a nation you never knew, those unknown will come hurrying to you, for the sake of the Lord your God, of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you.

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near. Let the wicked man abandon his way, the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him, to our God who is rich in forgiving; for my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways - it is the Lord who speaks. Yes, the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts.

Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Is 12

R/ You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

1. Truly, God is my salvation, I trust, I shall not fear. For the Lord is my strength, my song, he became my saviour. With joy you will draw water



from the wells of salvation.

2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name! Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples! Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)

3. Sing a psalm to the Lord for he has done glorious deeds, make them known to all the earth! People of Zion, sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (R.)

Second Reading 5:1-9

A reading from the first letter of St John

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and whoever loves the Father that begot him loves the child that he begets. We can be sure that we love God's children if we love God himself and do what he has commanded us; this is what loving God is - keeping his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult, because anyone who has been begotten by God has already overcome the world; this is the victory over the world - our faith.

Who can overcome the world? Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus Christ who came by water and blood,



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Website: nowraparish.org.au Incorporates the Church Communities of St Michael, Nowra; St Patrick, Berry

Sacred Heart, Bomaderry; Mary, Help of Christians, Culburra; St Joseph, Kangaroo Valley; Holy Spirit, Vincentia.

The Baptism of the Lord [Year B]

11 January 2009

Sunday Masses: (Holiday time):

NOWRA 6pm Vigil; 8am, 9.30am & 6pm
BERRY 8.00am
BOMADERRY 9.30am
CULBURRA 6pm Vigil & 8.00am
VINCENTIA 6pm Vigil, 8.00am & 9.30am
KANGAROO VALLEY 11.00am
SHOALHAVEN HEADS: Vigil 6.00pm on 10 Jan only.
 Friday Masses at 3.30 will resume 30 January.

MASSES DURING THE WEEK

Nowra: Mon 7.00am Tues/Wed/Thurs 8.15am
 Friday 7.00am and 11.30am Sat 9.00am
Berry: Tues 5.30pm **Culburra:** Thurs 5.30pm
Bomaderry: First Friday only 5.45pm
Vincentia: Mon, Thur, Fri 8.00am . Tues, Wed 5.30pm
Kangaroo Valley: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Sat 8.00am;
 Wed 6.15am. Divine Office is chanted 15 mins prior to
 Mass. No Mass on Fridays.

Confession/Reconciliation

Nowra: Sat 11.30.-12.30pm. 5.00 - 5.30pm.
Culburra: Sat. 5.30pm. **Berry:** Tues 6.00pm
B'derry: 1st Fri. 5.15pm.; **K Valley:** Sat 4.30 – 5.00pm
Vincentia: Sat. 5 - 5.30pm.



We prayerfully remember – **Wayne Foley Ernest Krix, Marie Lowry and Betty Pigott (Sydney)**, mother of Johanna Hunter, all of whom died recently. Also **Don Geary, Christopher McManus, Annie Moses, Yvette Tito, Emilia Coloma, Joyce McMahon, Maisie Brodie and John Standen** - whose anniversaries occur. *May they rest in eternal peace.*

Dates to Note :

Sat. 17 Jan. Santo Nino- The Philippino Annual Festival Mass – 9.00am at St Michael's.
Confirmation for the Nowra Parish is listed as Sunday 21 June.

Following the retirement of Fr Lawrie McCarthy CSsR as parish priest of St Michael's Thirroul after eleven years, Bishop Peter has appointed Fr Ken Cafe OFM as the new parish priest.

The Baptism of the Lord

“This experience for Jesus as he emerges from the water following baptism gives reassurance that this chosen path is indeed what God wants. In fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah, God ‘endows’ him with the Spirit and addresses him as ‘My Son, the Beloved; on whom my favour rests’. As throughout the New Testament (cf. Rom 5:5; 8:15), the experience of the Spirit is primarily an assurance of God’s love. Everything that is now to follow in the ministry of Jesus will derive its impulse and its meaning from this sense of deep, familial intimacy with the Father.



For this reason it is appropriate to read this particular Gospel at the celebration of baptism. Each and every Christian has the right to hear, ‘You are my beloved son, my beloved daughter, in whom I take delight’, personally addressed to him or her by God. Would it not make a difference if that was the first thing we allowed ourselves to hear on rising every morning, if we began our day, our work, our ministry with that divine address ringing in our ears – not because we deserve it or have earned it but simply because we know that that is how God looks upon us in Christ?” {Fr Brendan Byrne SJ}

Easter is the Feast that is directly related to Christian Sacramental Baptism, however this is an appropriate occasion to reflect on our own Baptismal ‘calling’.

Pope Benedict appeals for an end to the conflict in the Gaza Strip:

The Heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem today, in all the Churches in the Holy Land, ask the faithful to pray for an end to the conflict in the Gaza Strip and to implore justice and peace for their land. I join them and I also ask you to do the same, remembering, "the victims, the wounded, and the broken-hearted... for those living in panic and fear, that God may bless them with calm, tranquillity and true peace". The tragic news reaching us from Gaza shows how the rejection of dialogue leads to situations that bear unspeakably heavily upon the peoples who are once again victims of hatred and war. War and hatred do not resolve problems. Let us pray, therefore, that "the Child in the manger... may inspire the authorities and those responsible on both sides, Israeli and Palestinian, to take immediate action to put an end to the current tragic situation".



We continue to observe the **Year of St Paul** until July *“For St. Paul and for all Christians, faith is not based on a myth, but on a personal encounter with the Risen Jesus through the church. In his writings, St. Paul makes it clear that he recognizes the primacy of the first apostles and that the teaching he is handing on, is the teaching of the apostles.”* Pope Benedict

We welcome **Mr John Kiak**, who is staying in the parish for 2 weeks. John, who has been in Australia for three years, comes from Papua New Guinea. He is looking at joining our Diocese as a seminarian – we are sure that you will make John welcome.

We welcome back from holidays **Duane Fernandez** our pastoral year seminarian and **Robbie Forsythe** our parish secretary. Fr Richard will be away this week teaching at the **Summer School of Evangelisation** at St Stanislaus College in Bathurst.