



Praying with Scripture

The Baptism of the Lord

Introductory Prayer

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, / his courts with praise.” (Ps 100:4)

This prayer and reflection guide can help you pray with the Bible and better understand Scripture.

Begin with praise by praying the Canticle of Zechariah:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
for he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hand of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(Lk 1:68-79)

Scripture Reading for the Baptism of the Lord

“Faith comes from what is heard.” (Rom 10:17)

Read the scripture passage below.

Gospel Reading for the Baptism of the Lord (Lk 3:15-16, 21-22)

The people were filled with expectation,
and all were asking in their hearts
whether John might be the Christ.
John answered them all, saying,

"I am baptizing you with water,
but one mightier than I is coming.
I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptized
and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying,
heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon
him
in bodily form like a dove.
And a voice came from heaven,
"You are my beloved Son;
with you I am well pleased."

Read the passage a second time out loud. Use the following suggestions as you re-read the words of Scripture:

- ✚ Review the passage and underline the phrases that touch you or challenge you.
- ✚ Write down any thoughts that may come to you in this moment of quiet reflection.
- ✚ Savor the words of Scripture, and take a few moments to receive the Word into your mind and heart.

Reflection

"The word of God is living and effective." (Heb 4:12)

The Word of God is for everyone. Sometimes a verse may contain the Lord's heart and voice for you today, sometimes it may be for a time years to come, or it may be speaking to someone else in the Body of Christ, or to someone who has not yet been received into the Body.

Briefly consider the following questions without seeking an immediate answer. Simply allow the questions to stir your heart.

- ✚ Does this reading apply to your life right now, or the life of someone you know?
- ✚ How does this Scripture strengthen the Body of Christ?
- ✚ How does it build the Kingdom of God?

Dialogue with God

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." (Jas 4:8)

Spend some time in conversation with the Lord. These ideas may help:

- ✚ Set your gaze on the Lord, with whom you are speaking. Consider the character of the Lord: his holiness, his goodness, and his love.
- ✚ If a question comes to your heart—related or not, present that question to the Lord. If the passage stirs up hopes or desires, confusion or doubts, present them to the Lord. The Lord knows your heart but wants you to freely share with him.
- ✚ Trust that the Lord receives your prayer and will answer you.




Contemplation

“Come away by yourselves . . . and rest a while.” (Mk 6:31)



REFLECTION
RESOURCE

After thinking about how the passage applies to you and others, spend some quiet time with the Word. Consider these suggestions to guide your contemplation of the scripture reading:

-  Rest with this Scripture in the presence of God for a few minutes.
-  Allow the Holy Spirit to speak. Listen for the Lord’s voice echoing within.
-  Is there something from the Scripture that touches you, that you would simply like to keep in your heart? Did you receive a new thought or inspiration that moved you? Write these inspirations down to discern God’s voice.

Concluding Prayer

“Give thanks to him; bless his name.” (Ps 100:4)

In thanksgiving, conclude your prayer by praying the Canticle of Mary, the Magnificat:

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.

(Luke 1:46-55)

Copyright © 2018, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved.

Scripture excerpts taken from *Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States, second typical edition*, copyright © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. All rights reserved. English translation of the *Benedictus* (Canticle of Zechariah) and the *Magnificat* (Canticle of Mary) courtesy of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET).