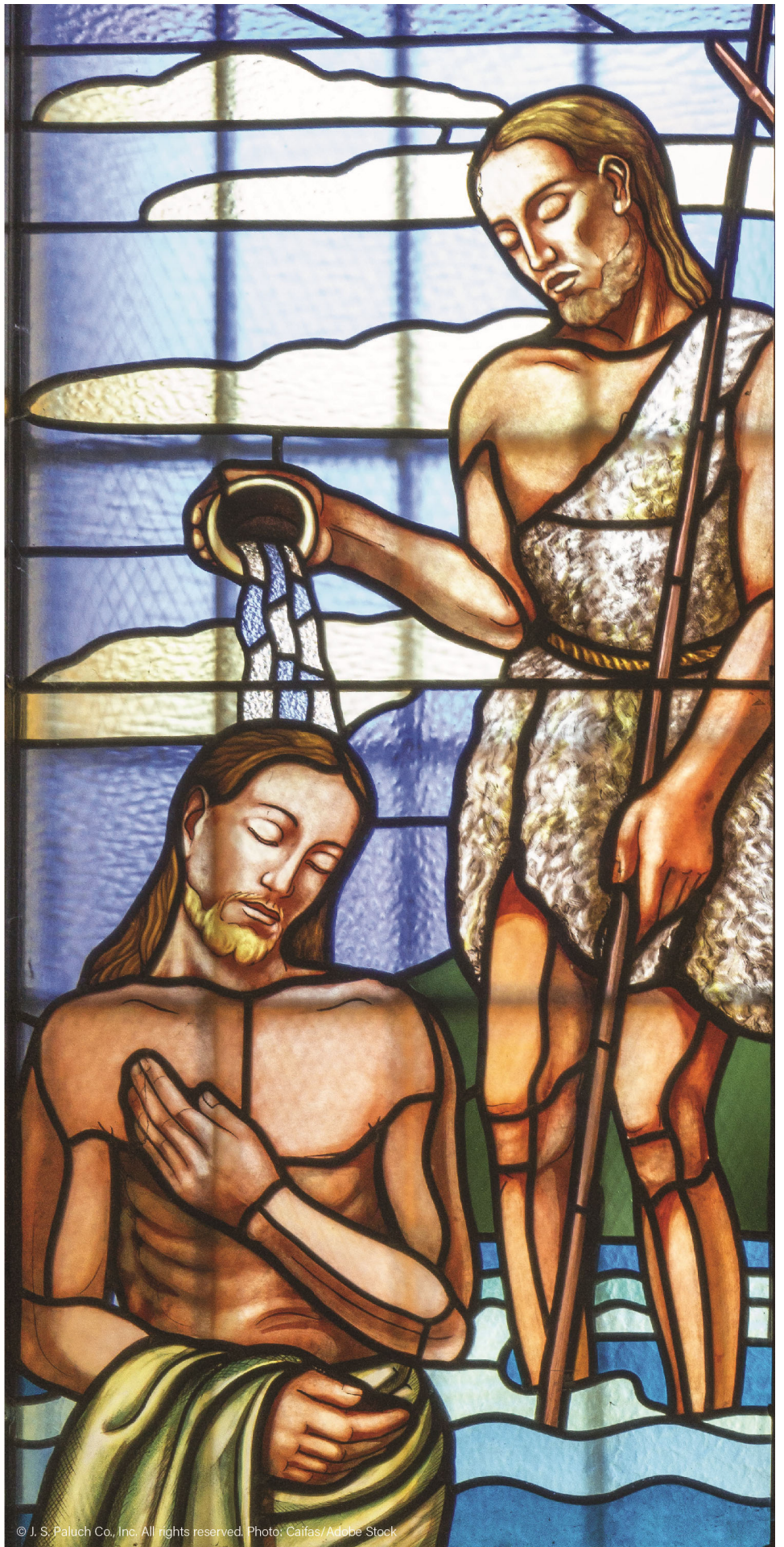


A VOICE CAME  
FROM HEAVEN,  
"YOU ARE MY  
BELOVED SON;  
WITH YOU I AM  
WELL PLEASED."

LUKE 3:22

THE  
**BAPTISM**  
of THE LORD

JANUARY 9, 2022



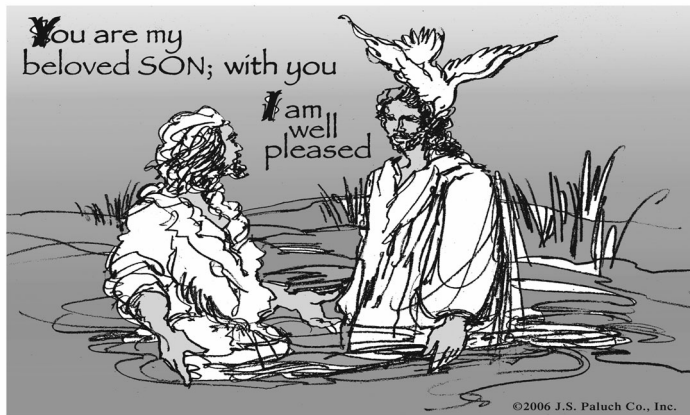
## *Baptismal Death And Resurrection*

As we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, we also honor our own baptism as our initiation into the Christian life and community. In the Gospel, the baptism of Jesus, with his immersion and then emergence from the water, points to his later submission to God at his death, and his emergence from the grave at his resurrection. This pattern of death and resurrection is our path too, as followers of Jesus. Throughout life, often in small ways, we learn to surrender our limited and self-centered agendas. This surrender often feels like death. The sacrament of Baptism ritually enacts this pattern to remind us of Jesus' death and resurrection, so that we too might embrace the deaths and resurrections of our own lives. As Jesus emerged from the water, he encountered his Father and the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus, we can know we are God's beloved, empowered by the Spirit.

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## *Saints and Special Observances*

**Sunday:** The Baptism of the Lord  
**Monday:** First Week in Ordinary Time  
**Thursday:** St. Hilary  
**Saturday:** Blessed Virgin Mary



## *Turning The Tide*

When everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe

## *Readings for the Week*

**Monday:** 1 Sm 1:1-8; Ps 116:12-19; Mk 1:14-20  
**Tuesday:** 1 Sm 1:9-20; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd;  
Mk 1:21-28  
**Wednesday:** 1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20; Ps 40:2, 5, 7-10;  
Mk 1:29-39  
**Thursday:** 1 Sm 4:1-11; Ps 44:10-11, 14-15, 24-25;  
Mk 1:40-45  
**Friday:** 1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a; Ps 89:16-19;  
Mk 2:1-12  
**Saturday:** 1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a; Ps 21:2-7;  
Mk 2:13-17  
**Sunday:** Is 62:1-5; Ps 96:1-3, 7-10; 1 Cor 12:4-11;  
Jn 2:1-11

## *Today's Readings*

**First Reading** — Isaiah speaks of the Servant whom the Lord upholds; he shall bring forth justice to the nations (Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7) or Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11.

**Psalm** — The Lord will bless his people with peace (Psalm 29) or Psalm 104.

**Second Reading** — Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit; he went out healing and doing good (Acts 10:34-38) or Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7.

**Gospel** — A voice comes from heaven proclaiming Jesus as the beloved Son, with whom God is well pleased (Luke 3:15-16, 21-22).

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## *Prayer Of The Week*

The Baptism of the Lord  
Almighty ever-living God,  
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River  
Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,  
solemnly declared him your beloved Son,  
grant that your children by adoption,  
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,  
may always be well pleasing to you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

## *Reflection question:*

**What can I do this week to be well pleasing to God?**

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## *Treasures From Our Tradition*

Merry Christmas! Share that cheerful greeting with some folks today. They may wonder if you have had any Elvis sightings lately, attended Star Trekkie conventions, or were Cleopatra in a previous lifetime. Despite the skeptics, today is solidly within the Christmas season. In fact, in some strands of the Christian tradition it represents the clearest manifestation of the mystery of the Incarnation. On Christmas Day, for example, the Gospel reading is the Prologue of John's Gospel, which reveals the glory of Christ shining through our humanity precisely in his baptism.

At any rate, this is an ancient feast, celebrated first in Egypt sixteen centuries ago. More than most other ancient people, the Egyptians understood the life-giving properties of water. On this day, they drew water from the Nile, so central in the history of their people, and reserved it in honor. Many other places copied the custom, so that St. John Chrysostom wrote of people in Antioch gathering at midnight to collect flowing water into vessels they brought from home since "today there is a blessing on the water." At home for dinner tonight, decorate the table with beautiful bowls of water and white candles, toast one another with goblets of sparkling water, and light a Christmas candle in the window one last time.

—James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

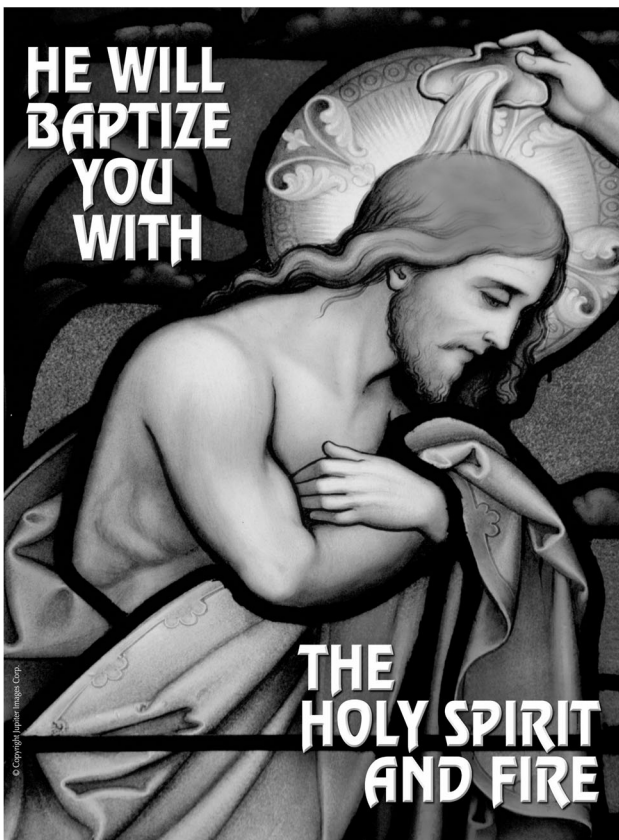
## *Fear Not*

Did the first reading from Isaiah sound familiar? It was also heard on the First Sunday of Advent in December of 2008. I suppose it could be a reminder that John the Baptist appears at the beginning of the Advent/Christmas season and at the end. In Advent we were preparing for Jesus' coming at Christmas. Now we are preparing for his coming at any time.

The reading from Isaiah talks about the Lord coming in mercy to the people whose "guilt is expiated" (Isaiah 40:2). The mountains and hills will be leveled, symbolic of making an easy way to the Lord. In other words, the Lord is approachable. With our sins forgiven we need not fear asking God for help: "Fear not to cry out" (Isaiah 40:9). The Lord comes in power, not to strike sinners down but to shepherd them and lead them.

In the second reading, St. Paul has a similar theme. Jesus gave his life for us on the cross so that we could be free from sin and able to reject evil desires. We are free to give ourselves in love as he did. And he does this, not because we did anything to deserve it, but from his own love and mercy for us. Think about that. No matter how bad I was in the past, the Lord loves me enough to forgive it all, and even better, to give the Spirit to help me stay close to God. How do we prepare for this? We can start by hearing the words of the readings today, letting them sink into our hearts and minds. Read them again at home, and remind yourself that you have been forgiven, that you can live as a person "eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14). Ask the Spirit to help you see what things are keeping you from being like Jesus and to give you the strength to say no. And look for ways you can be more loving with your family, then with your friends, and eventually with anyone who needs your help. When we let that Spirit guide us, we become like Jesus in that we can listen for God to say, "You are my beloved child; with you I am well pleased" (see Luke 3:22).

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## *Temper And Pride*

Temper is what gets most of us into trouble. Pride is what keeps us there.

—Anonymous

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