



St. John's Parish
Roman Catholic Church

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PRAYER OPENS THE HEAVEN

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD - JANUARY 12, 2025

The Gospel of today's Liturgy shows us the scene with which Jesus' public life begins: he, who is the Son of God and the Messiah, goes to the banks of the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. After about 30 years of hidden life, Jesus does not present himself with a miracle, or by rising to the podium to teach. He queues up with the people who were going to receive baptism from John. Today's liturgical hymn says that the people went to be baptized with a bare soul and bare feet, humbly. This is a beautiful attitude: with a bare soul and bare feet. And Jesus shares the plight of us sinners, he descends towards us; he descends into the river, and into the wounded history of humanity. He immerses himself in our waters to heal them, and he immerses himself with us, in our midst. He does not rise up above us, but rather comes down towards us with a bare soul, with bare feet, like the people. He does not go on his own, nor with a selected, privileged group. No: he goes with the people. He belongs to those people and he goes with them to be baptized, with those humble people.

Let us reflect on an important point: in the moment that Jesus receives Baptism, the text says that he "was praying" (Lk 3:21). It is good for us to contemplate this: Jesus prays. But why? He, who is the Lord, the Son of God, prays like us? Yes, Jesus — the Gospels repeat this many times — spends a lot of time in prayer: at the beginning of every day, often at night, before making important decisions.... His prayer is a dialogue, a relationship with the Father. Thus, in today's Gospel, we can see the "two moments" in the life of Jesus: on the one hand, he descends towards us into the waters of the Jordan; on the other, he raises his eyes and his heart, praying to the Father.

It is a great lesson for us: we are all immersed in the problems of life and in many complicated situations, called upon to face difficult moments and choices that get us down. But if we do not want to be crushed, we need to raise everything upwards. And this is exactly what prayer does. It is not an escape route; prayer is not a magic ritual or a repetition of memorized refrains. No. To pray is the way to let God act within us, to understand what he wants to communicate to us even in the most difficult situations, to pray to have the strength to go forward. Many people feel they cannot go on, and pray: "Lord, give me the strength to continue". We too, very often, have done this. Prayer helps us because it unites us to God, it opens us up to the encounter with him. Yes, prayer is the key that opens our heart to the Lord. It is dialoguing with God, it is listening to his Word, it is worshipping: remaining in silence, entrusting what we are experiencing to him. And sometimes it is also crying out to him like Job, venting with Him. Crying out like Job; He is the father; He understands well. He never gets angry with us. And Jesus prays. Prayer — to use a beautiful image from today's Gospel — "opens the heaven" (cf. v. 21). Prayer opens the heaven: it gives life oxygen, it gives a breath of fresh air even in the midst of breathlessness and lets us see things from a broader perspective. Above all, it enables us to have the same experience of Jesus by the Jordan: it makes us feel like beloved children of the Father. When we pray, the Father says to us too, as he does to Jesus in the Gospel: "You are my beloved Son" (cf. v. 22). Being God's children began on the day of our Baptism, which immersed us in Christ and, as members of the people of God, made us become beloved children of the Father. Let us not forget the date of our Baptism! If I were to ask each one of you now: what is the date of your Baptism? Perhaps some of you do not remember. This is a beautiful thing: remembering the date of your baptism because it is our rebirth, the moment in which we became children of God with Jesus! And when you return home — if you do not know — ask your mother, your aunt, or your grandparents: "When was I baptized?", and remember that date so as to celebrate it, to thank the Lord. And today, at this moment, let us ask ourselves: how is my prayer going? Do I pray out of habit, do I pray unwillingly, just reciting formulas, or is my prayer an encounter with God? I, a sinner, always with the people of God, never isolated? Do I cultivate intimacy with God, dialogue with him, listen to his Word? Among the many things we do each day, let us not neglect prayer: let us dedicate time to it, let us use short invocations to be repeated often, let us read the Gospel every day. The prayer that opens the heaven. And now, let us turn to Our Lady, the prayerful Virgin, who made her life into a hymn in praise of God.

ENGLISH SCHEDULE

The Baptism of the Lord

Saturday, January 11, 2025 **5:00 PM**
Deceased members of the Morabito Family

Sunday, January 12, 2025 **9:00 AM**
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 **11:00 AM**
+Violet MacDonald

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 **11:00 AM**
+Janet Silver

Thursday, January 16, 2025 **11:00 AM**

Friday, January 17, 2025 **11:00 AM**
St. Anthony Abbot

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Saturday, January 18, 2025 **5:00 PM**
Nicole Scarfone & Family Deceased members

Sunday, January 19, 2025 **9:00 AM**
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

HORARIOS EN ESPAÑOL

El Bautismo del Señor

Sabado 11 de enero, 2025 **7:00 PM**
+Marvin Castillo Courtade +Gloria Flores de Lazo
+Victor Ramirez +Consuelo Paez +Laura Paez

Domingo 12 de enero, 2025 **11:00 AM & 1:00PM**
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

Martes 14 de enero, 2025 **12:00 PM**
+Consuelo Paez

Miércoles 15 de Enero, 2025 **12:00 PM**
Accion de Gracias: Andres Quintana

Jueves 16 de enero, 2025 **12:00 PM**
+Consuelo Paez

Viernes 17 de enero, 2025 **12:00 PM**
San Antonio Abad
+Consuelo Paez

Il Domingo del Tiempo Ordinario

Sabado 18 de enero, 2025 **7:00 PM**
+Consuelo Paez

Domingo 19 de enero, 2025 **11:00 AM & 1:00PM**
Por la Comunidad Parroquial



St. Mary's Church - Kitchener JUBILEE 2025 PILGRIMAGE HOURS: As a designated Pilgrimage Site, will be open for special pilgrimage hours during the Jubilee Year of Hope in 2025. These hours will be **Tuesday's from 1 - 3 pm and Thursday's from 9 am - 12 pm.** Address: 56 Duke Street West Kitchener.

Pilgrims from all over will be coming to visit St. Mary's for prayer and a special pilgrimage stamp for their prayer booklets. St. Mary's is one of six churches in the Diocese of Hamilton that have been chosen to have replicas of the Holy Door at St. Peter's in Rome. We also will serve as a hub for pilgrimage activities in the Waterloo Deanery and will be advertising them throughout the Jubilee Year. May God continue to grant us the beautiful gift of Hope!

St. Agnes Education Cafe with Teresa Hartnett: Families today can be faced with many challenges: mental health, addiction, division, financial stress & beyond. Even the strongest of families can suffer under the pressure. How can we draw on our faith to persevere with unshakeable hope despite the struggles? Join us for the next St. Agnes Education Café: "Our Families: Signs of Hope Amid the Challenges" with Teresa Hartnett, Director, Family Ministry, Diocese of Hamilton. Sunday, January 26th 2:00-3:30pm at St. Agnes Parish (75 Bluevale St N, Waterloo)

St. Louis Parish - Bible Study: The Book of Revelation with Jeff Cavins. 11 part DVD course running concurrently on Sundays at 12:30 PM (lunch included), or on Mondays at 7:30 PM (with refreshments). This study program shows how the kingdom established by Christ in His Church is intimately connected with the kingdom of heaven. Jeff Cavins pulls back the veil on the rich symbolism present in Revelation. Discover what the mysterious figures and images of Revelation mean and see how Revelation is more than an apocalyptic vision of the "end times." Course is free. Handouts provided. If you wish to have your own workbook (\$38) please contact the office. Start: Jan.19/20 in the St. Louis Large Hall (Entry via the elevator door). 53 Allen St. E. Waterloo. For schedule see stlouisparish.ca or contact the office at 519-743-4101, stlouiswaterloo@hamiltondiocese.com