

St Michael's Parish, Blackrock

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11/01/2026

Baptism of the Lord

WEEKLY MASS LEAFLET UPDATES:
Email to : parish@stmichaelsblackrock.ie



BAPTISMS: Please contact the parish office.
MARRIAGES: Minimum 3 months notice required by Church and State.
Pre-marriage course required.

Mass Times
Sundays: 9 am & 11 am
Saturday Vigil: 6.00 pm
Tuesday & Friday: 9.30 am
Baptisms are held on the 2nd and 4th
Saturdays of each month at 4pm.
Fr. Michael Keohane Co-PP

Recently Deceased
Rea Kennedy, Tivoli.
Frank O'Shea, Blackrock
Rest in Peace

Baptisms
Freddie Alexander Hogan.
Welcome to the Christian Family.

Still Christmas
The crib is still in place in the church and the Christmas decorations remain as well as we reach the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord this weekend. In fact there is a great comfort in these during the past few days of cold and damp. While the schools re-opened very early this year, many of us yearned for the sights and sounds of Christmas and the new year for a few more days. This yearning is reflected in the church calendar as the Christmas season continues until this Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

On this feast, Jesus takes his place ‘in the queue’ to be baptised by John the Baptist. It’s a declaration that Jesus has taken on our nature giving us true hope. We have been blessed in our own baptism. The first reading at Mass last Sunday said that ‘I have taken root in a privileged people’. Our baptism makes us one of those so privileged. We are grateful for our faith despite all the challenges of modern life. Our faith helps us to be undaunted by the year ahead giving us the resources and strength that we will need. May the Lord bless you and your family into 2026.
- Fr. Michael

Christmas Dues Envelopes – remain available in the church. Contributions can also be given to the ‘Priests Collection’ via the Donate button on the parish website.

Do This in Memory Mass for First Holy Communion children and their families on next Saturday 17th January @ 6pm.

Confirmation 2026 – Ceremony of Light – Saturday 31st January @ 6pm Mass – in preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation on Mon. 2nd March.

Diocesan Needs Collection this weekend. This collection allows for vital supports to your parish in many areas, including Education, Religious Faith Formation in schools, Mission and Ministry, Youth Ministry, Safeguarding, and Stewardship and Governance as well as guidance in practical matters such as Data Protection, Finance, and Property.

On Sunday, 1 February 2026, we will host Songs of Praise, an afternoon for those involved in music ministry, in the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne, beginning at 2.30pm. This afternoon is for all who are involved in music ministry to come together to learn new music, reflect, listen, and lift our voices in praise, followed by an opportunity to chat over light hospitality.

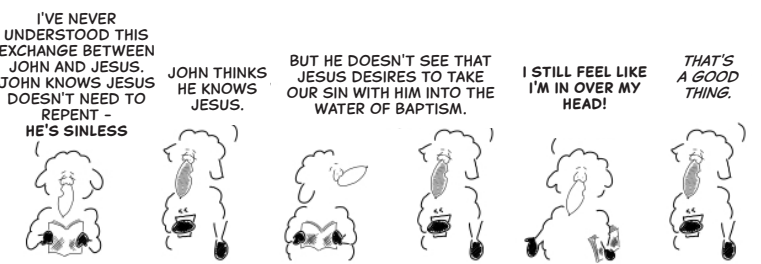
Fr. Michael
085 8735905
frmichael@corkandross.org

A brief introduction on Sunday's readings
First reading Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
In its historical context, this promise meant a political saviour. However, from the New Testament onwards, Christians have heard in the reading an oracle about Jesus, the son of God.
Second reading Acts 10:34-48
Our reading is a summary of Jesus’ ministry and it includes the all-important John the Baptist. He was Jesus’ mentor and first teacher.
Gospel Matthew 3:13-17
The fact Jesus’ baptism by John is rock solid history. The form of the story is a theophany, when a word of God discloses Jesus’ identity.

The Papers Say.....
Irish Catholic. (1). Martin Scorsese and the pilgrimage of everyday grace. (2). Every school in Ireland should have an Anti-Bullying Policy. (3). The ousting of Maduro raises questions of international law and order. (4). David Quinn: What are the prospects for a MAGA-style party in Ireland? (5) Growth of permanent diaconate offers a quite but steady hope. (6). Mary Kenny: The stars and stripes are no longer forever ...

Gentle reminder!!
For those attending with young children, there is a Family Room available at the top left inside the church. Thanks.


An in-depth commentary on today's gospel:
Verse 13 Jesus came to John from Nazareth, in Galilee. John was a prophet, proclaiming the last days, offering a baptism which symbolised the conversion to God’s word as revealed to John himself. Jesus was definitely a follower, as is shown by the baptism and also by the timing of the start of Jesus’ ministry. Implied in the withdrawal to the desert from Jerusalem is a critique of the Temple cult (as can also be seen in Jesus’ ministry). Baptise here means to “immerse”.
Verse 14 This Matthean addition has been accounted for above. This extra Matthean verse communicates the unease of the writer and perhaps his community (in Antioch on the Orontes).
Verse 15 Each has a role within a relationship, which includes relationship with God. Righteousness is a kind of code word here meaning the right fulfilment of the Scriptures. Thus, John acts “righteously.”
Verse 16 Notice that the actual baptism is not recounted but presumed (a kind of ellipsis). The symbolism indicates an experience of the numinous—heavens opened, God’s Spirit descends. Alighting on him makes the symbolism very physical. This was probably not Mark’s intention when he spoke of “like a dove.” However, for Matthew the real meaning is not physically but really and truly.
Verse 17 A profound affirmation of identity. It has often been noted that the descent of the Holy Spirit marks the end of the relative absence of the Holy Spirit. In rabbinic tradition, it was considered that at this time all one could expect was an echo of the voice of God (a bat qol, literally a daughter of the voice). Mark has “you are my Son”, a real echo of Ps 2. Because Matt has made clear the Sonship of Jesus already (in Matthew 1-2), it makes less sense to use “you”, so Matt changes the wording to “this is”. The scene becomes, in Matthew’s hands, not only a realisation of Sonship, but a revelation of the Son to the world. This incipiently “Trinitarian” moment anticipates Mt 28:19.



The Baptism of the Lord and our baptism
Our word baptism comes from a Greek word — baptisma — which means “immersion” — not on the sense did you leave the immersion on, but a descent to water — the meaning of which must come from the context. Clearly, Jesus felt himself attracted to the preaching and programme of John the Baptist. As a sign of his personal engagement with that preaching and programme, Jesus underwent John’s immersion or baptism. John preached the future coming of God’s kingdom and, as a consequence, conversion of life and heart to enter into that kingdom. For Jesus, it signalled as well a new sense of being a child of God — ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him’ as well a new sense of the gift of the Spirit. In other words, it set the programme for Jesus’ life and eventually for his own ministry, preaching and destiny. In his day, this was a radical alternative, a highly unconventional act.

As Christians we have a comprehensive vision for being human, centred on the extraordinary love of God. There is a set of values — often in tension with conventional values. There is a path to happiness — again often in tension with conventional happiness. There is a sense of life as a great pilgrimage of transformation, a conversion to goodness and love, encompassing all that I am — again in tension with the limited vision of a merely materialist world view. But all of these — the values, the sense of pilgrimage and conversion — grow out a personal encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, the risen Lord of life and death. That encounter is open to everyone at every stage of life.

Reflections



1. The Baptism of Jesus marks a turning point in his life, and the start of his public ministry. Recall moments when your life changed and you moved into a new phase.
2. The experience was one in which Jesus had a new sense of his own identity. What have been the experiences which have helped shaped your sense of who you are?
3. How have you come to an awareness of being a child of God, beloved by God, and one on whom rests the grace of God?
4. It is surprising that Jesus, the Saviour of the world, asks to be baptised by John. The request symbolises his desire to identify with us. At the same time he is filled with the Holy Spirit. That step of identifying with us is an important element in his being able to help us. Have you ever found that when someone identifies with you, it is easier for him/her to help you? Has your ability to identify with others had any impact on your effectiveness in helping others?

PRAYER
God of the covenant, you anointed your beloved Son with the power of the Holy Spirit, to be the light of the nations and release for captives. Grant that we who are born again of water and the Spirit may proclaim with our lips the good news of his peace and show forth in our lives the victory of his justice.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendour of eternal light, God for ever and ever. Amen.

BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL
This month's collection came to €2830
Many thanks for your generous wonderful support.

Thought for the day
Begin by recalling some special moment between yourself and your parents. Did you ever hear from them the equivalent of “This is my son, my daughter, the beloved: my favour rests on you”? In Jesus’ ministry, on several occasions, he felt such a word from his Abba, his Father. His baptism by John was one such moment, as was the Transfiguration later on. Such deep love and affirmation grounded him as a human being and as God’s prophet to the people of Israel. Our sense of calling grows out of our relationship with the Father, whose beloved we are, whose favour we too enjoy.

PRAYER
Let us hear again, Abba, Father, your words of favour to each one of us. Direct us on the Way of discipleship, that we may be bearers of the Good News by simply being who we truly are before you, your children.

K O’Mahony OSA


Excerpt from Christmas Day Homily of Pope Leo XIV Part 2

“He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:11-12). This is the paradoxical way in which peace is already among us: God’s gift invites us in; it seeks to be welcomed and, in turn, inspires our own self-giving. God surprises us because he leaves himself open to rejection. He also captivates us because he draws us away from indifference. Becoming children of God is a true power – one that remains buried so long as we keep our distance from the cry of children and the frailty of the elderly, from the helpless silence of victims and the resigned melancholy of those who do the evil they do not want.

To remind us of the joy of the Gospel, our beloved Pope Francis wrote: “Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people’s lives and know the power of tenderness” (Evangelii Gaudium, 270).

Dear brothers and sisters, since the Word was made flesh, humanity now speaks, crying out with God’s own desire to encounter us. The Word has pitched his fragile tent among us. How, then, can we not think of the tents in Gaza, exposed for weeks to rain, wind and cold; and of those of so many other refugees and displaced persons on every continent; or of the makeshift shelters of thousands of homeless people in our own cities? Fragile is the flesh of defenseless populations, tried by so many wars, ongoing or concluded, leaving behind rubble and open wounds. Fragile are the minds and lives of young people forced to take up arms, who on the front lines feel the senselessness of what is asked of them and the falsehoods that fill the pompous speeches of those who send them to their deaths.

Anam Cara, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, will hold its monthly Parent Support Evening on Tuesday 20th January 2026 at 7.30pm in the Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty. This event is free and open to all bereaved parents regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death, or how recent their death was. You do not need to register in advance. To find out more call 01 4045378 or email info@anamcara.ie



BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL
Fr. Michael has generously offered the poor box near the exit as a collection point for SVP.
If you wish to contribute any time, it would be appreciated.