

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH
41 KENSINGTON CHURCH ST., LONDON W8 4BB

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Mass Times: Sun: Sat Vigil 6.00 p.m., Sun. 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.

Weekdays (including Bank Holidays): 8.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.

Livestream: www.carmelitechurch.org & YouTube: "Kensington Carmelite Church"

Confessions: Sat: 11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. & 5.00 - 5.50 p.m. Weekdays: 5.40 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,

Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

Safeguarding Reps: Franca Bren

The Baptism of the Lord – 8th January 2023

The Significance of Jesus' Baptism

This Sunday we celebrate the baptism of Jesus. I expect there will be a question in your mind why Jesus was baptised, since we know that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, and Jesus had no sin. Why did he go to be baptised?

The first thing to note is that Jesus was not baptised as an infant. Many of us would have been baptised as infants. True, we celebrate Jesus's baptism only a few weeks after his birth but our liturgies are not a chronological sequencing of the life of Jesus. Jesus went to be baptised probably when he was 30 years old. We celebrate his baptism because of its significance for our own baptism and its relation to his mission which ultimately climaxes in his death on the cross.

Before John began to baptize, there were other forms of baptism in Israel. Among Orthodox Jews there were regular ablutions for worship. Later in the first century there was also proselyte baptism among the Jews. But none of these was assumed to have the power to cleanse sin. The atonement for sins was achieved purely through temple sacrifice. However, out in the desert at Qumran was a group of ascetics among whom John the Baptist is believed to have grown up (John had described himself as a voice crying in the wilderness and references to him in the Gospels describe him as a prophet from the wilderness). This sect known as the Qumran Community was an eschatological group that believed in the imminent coming of God's judgment, therefore they set themselves apart and adopted practices such as ritual washing that would mark them out as belonging to the true and purified Israel. It is out of such a tradition that John the Baptist emerged.

Unlike the Qumran community, however, John believed that the call to holiness, the preparation for the coming of the Messiah was a call for the whole Israel not just for a select few in the solitary of the wilderness. Hence he emerged from the wilderness, calling all Israel to repentance through baptism by water in order to prepare for the coming One. He made it clear that his baptism was with water as a preliminary purification for a future baptism which would be administered by the One coming after him who would baptise with the Holy spirit. The account in John's Gospel tells us that John the Baptist did not know Jesus as the Messiah until Jesus turned up at the Jordan for baptism. But he knew how to identify the Messiah because, as John himself said, "he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 1:33).

Therefore, according to John's Gospel, Jesus came to be baptised in order for him to be revealed to Israel as its Messiah. John the Baptist declares that it is for this purpose he came baptizing with water: to reveal him [the Messiah] to Israel. In Matthew's Gospel John insists that it is himself

who needs baptism from Jesus and not the other way round. Jesus tells him that he is doing it to fulfil all righteousness. So we see from these accounts that Jesus's baptism was really for us, those he was taking up the mission to redeem. Jesus accepted baptism so that he would be one with his brothers and sisters who gathered around the Jordan to express their repentance. St Paul puts it this way: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

The significance of Jesus' baptism rests on its metaphor for his death and resurrection. Just as he opted for baptism although without sin to be washed away, he will choose to die for the sins of the world. And, as he descended into the waters of Jordan and was confirmed the Son of God by the 'voice from heaven,' as he emerged from the waters, so he will descend into the realm of the dead and rise again through the Holy Spirit.

May we who are baptised in Christ experience the fullness of the benefits of his baptism.

NOTICES

Final Call for Registration - Confirmation Classes begin January 15

Confirmation classes for the academic year 2023 will start on Sunday the 15th of January 2023 from 4.30 pm to 5.45 pm. Children between the age of 13 to 17 are eligible to apply. Please note that all applications must reach the parish reception on or before the 15th of January 2023. Paper application forms are available at the back of the church. You may also complete the form on our website <https://carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes/> Classes are due to start in January.

Peace Sunday

Next Sunday, 15 January, is PEACE SUNDAY. In this country we have an active Catholic peace movement in Pax Christi. Their website suggests many ways we can all promote peace in our daily lives. There are activities for families to do at home, including a 15-minute peace liturgy for young children. www.paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2023. Pax Christi also needs our support to keep going. If you'd like to make a donation, small or large, please follow the link on paxchristi website www.paxchristi.org.uk.

Mass for the celebration of Santo Niño – 22nd January

You are invited to join the Filipino community in our parish for the celebration of this year's feast of Santo Niño (The Infant Jesus of Prague). A special Mass will be celebrated here in our Parish at 2.00pm on 22nd January. Do come and pray with us.

2023 Ecumenical Service

The 2023 Unity Service will be held on Thursday, 19th January at 7.00pm at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road SW7 4RL. Please save the date. Refreshments will follow after the service. All are welcome.

World Youth Day Lisbon 2023

Are you a young person trying to discern what God is calling you to do? Do you want to meet other Catholic young adults from across the globe? Come with the UK Carmelite friars as we travel from Avila to Fatima to Lisbon. We journey from 24th July to 6th August 2023. See the poster on the Notice Boards for more information.

Collections Last Sunday

Offering	£1254
Gift Aid Envelopes	£38

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD