

SUNDAY Plus

The Baptism of the Lord Divine Office Week I Year A



Invited by Jesus

Is there anywhere humanity is more alive than family life? Family life is a celebration of incarnation, God with us. Our physical, created reality is where God is present – and family life is all about that. Our bodies are God's gift and through them we give ourselves to each other – through sexuality, pregnancy, birth, nurturing, holding, bathing, hugging, carrying, tickling, cleaning cuts, changing nappies, playing football, preparing food, smelly feet and sports gear, teenage hormones, man flu, menopause, new life or old age.

We speak of body language and it is through this that we express what goes on in our hearts. Often the small gestures speak loudest: a kiss, a touch, a cup of tea, a meal cooked, a chore done, a story read. These moments in the day

to day are what nurture family life and mark us as family rather than house-sharers. Intimacy articulates the bond between us.

When faith and Gospel values shape our approach, we try to live simply, challenge injustice and share our resources with those in need. The challenge is to let the Gospel come to life in our lives: to incarnate it, put flesh on it. Our baptism invites us to be the body of Christ in the world... When we reach out beyond our own families in care and solidarity for anyone vulnerable or oppressed, we know that the Spirit of Jesus is acting through us. This is what the spirituality of family life is about – living active faith in the day to day.

Bairbre Cahill, Family Spirituality

May Mary, temple of the Spirit, help us to celebrate and welcome the wonders that the Lord works in us. Amen.

Say "Yes"

We foolishly suppose that prayer is about our own efforts, our longing for God, our attempts to love and praise and thank him. But all of this is only a consequence, a created response. Our prayer is God's work, God's creation. As you kneel there, sit there, walk about or whatever you do when you pray, you are saying "Yes" with your whole being to his will that you should be, that you should be you,

that you should be united to him. Your prayer is God's word of longing and loving in you, God's breathing of the Spirit in you, to make you want the union he wants. His desire is going through your heart to leap up to him and meet his desire again, like the desire of the writer who prayed to God to "send Wisdom"; yet it is truly your desire because he creates it as yours. His love is loving through your heart when you try to pray.

Maria Boulding,
The Coming of God

Do not be afraid! Accept the invitation of the Church and of Christ the Lord.

Pope Leo

Saints

St Lucy: seeing signs from God

By Sr Thérèse Garman OLP

After praying at St Agatha's shrine with Lucy, Lucy's mother was cured of a persistent illness and agreed to distribute their wealth among the poor people. The rich pagan whom she had wanted Lucy to marry against her mother's will was furious. Soldiers tried to take Lucy away forcibly. They could not move her, but her eyes were gouged out. She attributed her strength to the power of Jesus. Lucy means "light" and her witness over-came the spiritual darkness of her day and also helps us to rejoice in the light even in our darkest moments. At baptism, we were entrusted with the light of Christ. The vision of God's glory, revealed through Jesus, was so clear to Lucy that physical blindness did not obscure it. She embodies true vision, an example to us of spiritual understanding, focusing on Christ and his promises rather than the fleeting physical realities of this world.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence and a treasured former member of the Redemptorist Publications editorial team

READINGS

Today:
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17

Monday:
1 Samuel 1:1-8
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday:
1 Samuel 1:9-20
Mark 1:21-28

Scotland:
St Kentigern (Feast)
Isaiah 52:7-10
Matthew 28:16-20

Wednesday:
1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday:
1 Samuel 4:1-11
Mark 1:40-45

Friday:
1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday:
1 Samuel
9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1
Mark 2:13-17

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 49:3, 5-6
1 Corinthians 1:1-3
John 1:29-34