

CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 11 January 2015

Te Rātapu Tuatahi i muri i te Whakaaturanga / 1st Sunday of the Epiphany

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS



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SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; and he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38)

COLLECT OF THE DAY – *Let us pray:*

Heavenly Father, at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son: may we recognize him as our Lord and know ourselves to be your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**



What is Epiphany?

Observed on January 6th (the Day of Epiphany) and on several Sundays after this date, the Epiphany celebration remembers the three miracles that made known to the world the fact that Jesus Christ as a human person was of the nature of God. The word **epiphany** means *“to show, make known, or reveal.”* Jesus Christ was revealed to be of the nature of God shortly after his birth when the wise men visited him, when he was baptised in the Jordan River by Saint John the Baptist, and when he performed his first miracle at the wedding in Cana. The significance behind the visit of the wise men is the revealing of Christ as *“Lord and King.”* The wise men were the first non-Jews to publicly recognize that Jesus was of the nature of God, by way of their offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River which is being covered today revealed that Jesus was the Son of God and therefore was of the nature of God. Saint John the Baptist, according to Mark 1:9-11 of the gospel passage for today, testifies of the Holy Spirit coming down upon Jesus like a dove, and a voice from heaven saying, *“You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you.”* We also focus on the Cana wedding miracle when Jesus turned water into wine to reveal that he was of the nature of God, as part of the Epiphany celebration observance.

For the hāhi, the epiphany represents a responsibility to reveal Jesus as the Son and Saviour who was of the nature of God and sent into this world by God the Father to make up for the sins of mankind.



The Baptism of Jesus

The gospel passage for today from Mark 1 tells us that when Jesus was baptized by Saint John the Baptist and was coming up out of the water, the Holy Spirit in the visible form of a dove came down on him identifying him as *‘the One who was coming after Saint John the Baptist who would baptize people with the Holy Spirit’* (Mark 1:7-8). That is, Jesus was identified as the

promised Messiah, the Saviour sent to bring together God and man (refer to top picture on front page). And God spoke from heaven. He said that Jesus was his Son (Mark 1:11; refer to bottom picture on front page). This meant that Jesus was of the nature of God.

Christian baptism is a ceremony commanded by Jesus, by which Christians make a public statement that they have turned away from their sins and through faith received Jesus into their heart and promised to obey Jesus as their Lord; that is, they have been *“....baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 19:5). When a person does this, he is *“baptised with the Holy Spirit”* (Mark 1:8); that is, the Spirit of God who was in existence before creation (Gen. 1:1-5) enters into his heart (Acts 19:6) just as the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus when he was baptised. This is Jesus’ baptism with the Holy Spirit which Saint John the Baptist’s baptism with water just symbolised (Mark 1:8). It is the real presence of the Holy Spirit which gives the new believer in Christ the inner power of God to live in God’s way.

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



The Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

A reading from Genesis chapter 1 beginning at verse 1.

The Beginning

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty. There was darkness over the surface of the waves. At that time, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day." He called the darkness "night." There was evening, and there was morning. It was day one.

Let us all say together in te reo Māori the reading below from Genesis chapter 1 beginning at verse 1. Kia pānui tātou.

¹ He mea hanga na te atua i te timatanga te rangi me te whenua.

² A kahore he ahua o te whenua, i takoto kau; he pouri ano a runga i te mata o te hohonu. Na ka whakapaho te Wairua o te Atua i runga i te kare o nga wai.

³ A ka ki te Atua, kia marama: na ka marama.

⁴ A ka kite te Atua i te marama, he pai: a ka wehea e te Atua te marama i te pouri.

⁵ Na ka huaina e te Atua te marama ko te awatea, a ko te pouri i huaina e ia ko te po. A ko te ahiahi, ko te ata, he ra kotahi.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.



The Epistle Reading: Acts 19:1-7

A reading from Acts chapter 19 beginning at verse 1.

Paul Goes to Ephesus

¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road to Ephesus. When he arrived, he found some believers there. ² He asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?"

"No," they answered. "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

⁴ Paul said, "John baptized people, calling them to turn away from their sins. He told them to believe in the one who was coming after him. Jesus is that one."

⁵ After hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Paul placed his hands on them. Then the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke in languages they had not known before. They also prophesied. ⁷ There were about 12 men in all.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading: Mark 1:4-11

*The Holy Gospel according to Mark chapter 1 beginning at verse 4.
Praise and Glory to God.*

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the desert. He preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. ⁵ All the people from the countryside of Judea went out to him. All the people from Jerusalem went too. When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothes made out of camel's hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ Here is what John was preaching. "After me, there is someone coming who is more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie his sandals. ⁸ I baptize you with water. But he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus Is Baptized and Tempted

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee. John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ Jesus was coming up out of the water. Just then he saw heaven being torn open. Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down on him like a dove. ¹¹ A voice spoke to him from heaven. It said, "You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.



KURA RAUMATI: TUES., 13 JAN. TO SUN., 18 JAN., 2015.

[Tutors at the kura will include Bishop John, Mike Hawke, Matanuku Kaa, Tamer Elnady, Andrew Starkey, Anne Candy, Nyree Bowen Lilley, Jeanette King, Valerie François, Yoko Matsumoto and Sue Bagshaw].

HUI AMORANGI AGM 2015: FRI., 13 MAR. - SUN., 15 MAR., 2015.

