

Readings for the Rite of Baptism of Infants

At celebrations of Baptism there is generally only the Gospel reading. However a first reading may also be chosen.

Optional First Readings

1 A reading from the book of Exodus (17:3-7)

Give us water to drink.

Tormented by thirst, the people complained against Moses. ‘Why did you bring us out of Egypt?’ they said. ‘Was it so that I should die of thirst, my children too, and my cattle?’ Moses appealed to the Lord. ‘How am I to deal with this people?’ he said. ‘A little more and they will stone me!’ The Lord said to Moses, ‘Take with you some of the elders of Israel and move on to the forefront of the people; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the river, and go. I shall be standing before you there on the rock, at Horeb. You must strike the rock, and water will flow from it for the people to drink.’ This is what Moses did, in the sight of the elders of Israel. The place was named Massah and Meribah because of the grumbling of the sons of Israel and because they put the Lord to the test by saying, ‘Is the Lord with us, or not?’

2 A reading from the prophet Ezekiel 36:24-28

I shall pour clean water over you, and you will be cleansed of all your defilement.

The Lord says this: I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land. I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances. You will live in the land which I gave your ancestors. You shall be my people and I will be your God.

3 A reading from the prophet Ezekiel 47:1-9.12

I saw a stream of water coming from the Temple, bringing life to all wherever it flowed.

The angel brought me to the entrance of the Temple, where a stream came out from under the Temple threshold and flowed eastwards, since the Temple faced east. The water flowed from under the right side of the Temple, south of the altar. He took me out by the north gate and led me right round outside as far as the outer east gate where

the water flowed out on the right-hand side. The man went to the east holding his measuring line and measured off a thousand cubits; he then made me wade across the stream; the water reached my ankles. He measured off another thousand and made--me wade across the stream again; the water reached my knees. He measured off another thousand and made me wade across again; the water reached my waist. He measured off another thousand; it was now a river which I could not cross; the stream had swollen and was now deep water, a river impossible to cross. He then said, 'Do you see, son of man. He took me further, then brought me back to the bank of the river. When I got back, there were many trees on each bank of the river. He said, `This water flows east down to the Arabah and to the sea; and flowing into the sea it makes its waters wholesome. Wherever the river flows, all living creatures teeming in it will live. Fish will be very plentiful, for wherever the water goes it brings health, and life teems wherever the river flows. Along the river, on either bank, will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary. And their fruit will be good to eat and the leaves medicinal.'

4 A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 6:3-5

When we were baptised we went into the tomb with him: let us live a new life.

When we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life.

If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection.

5 A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:28-32

To become true images of his Son.

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called -he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

After saying this, what can we add? With God on our side who can be against us? Since God did not spare his own Son, but gave him upto benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that he will not refuse anything he can give.

6 A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 12:12-13
In the one Spirit we were all baptised.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because -all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

7 A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians 3:26-28
All baptised, in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ.

You are, all of you, sons of God through faith in ;Christ Jesus. All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female,- but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

8 A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 4:1-6
One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation, Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by, the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

9 A reading from the first letter of St Peter 2:4-5. 9-10
You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

Jesus Christ is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so -that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which he has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people at all and now you are the People of God; once you were outside the mercy and now you have been given mercy.

Options for the Gospel Reading

1 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 22:35-40

This is the greatest and the first commandment.

To disconcert Jesus, one of the Pharisees, a lawyer, put a question, 'Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?' Jesus said, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first Commandment. The second resembles it. You must love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also'

2 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 28:18-20

*Make disciples of all the nations;
baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

Jesus came up and spoke to his disciples. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.'

3 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 1:9-11

He was baptised in the Jordan by John,

Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

4 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 10:13-16

Let the little children come to me.

People were bringing little children to Jesus, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

5 A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 12:28-34

Listen, Israel, love the Lord your God with all your heart.

One of the scribes came up and put a question to Jesus, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?' Jesus replied, 'This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.' The scribe said to him, 'Well spoken, Master; what you have said is true: that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself, this is far more important than any holocaust or sacrifice.' Jesus, seeing how wisely he had spoken said, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' And after that no one dared to question him any more.

Shorter form

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 12:28-31

Listen, Israel, love the Lord your God with all your heart.

One of the scribes came up and put a question to Jesus, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?' Jesus replied; 'This is the first: Listen, Israel the Lord our God is the one Lord, and you-must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'

6 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 3:1-6

Unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven.

There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leading Jew, who came to Jesus by night, and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who comes from God; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him'. Jesus answered:

'I tell you most solemnly,
unless a man is born from above,
he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

Nicodemus said, 'How can a grown man be born? Can he go back into his mother's womb and be born again?' Jesus replied:

'I tell you most solemnly,
unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God:
what is born of the flesh is flesh;
what is born of the Spirit is spirit.'

7 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 4:5-14

A spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

Jesus came to the Samaritan town called Sychar, near the land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well is there and Jesus, tired by the journey, sat straight down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' – Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus replied:

'If you only knew what God is offering
and who it is that is saying to you:
Give me a drink,
you would have been the one to ask,
and he would have given you living water.'

'You have no bucket, sir,' she answered, 'and the well is deep: how could you get this living water? Are you a greater man than our father Jacob who gave us this well and drank from it himself with his sons and his cattle?'

Jesus replied:

'Whoever drinks this water will get thirsty again;
but anyone who drinks the water that I shall give
will never be thirsty again:
the water that I shall give
will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.'

8 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 6:44-47

Everybody who believes has eternal life.

Jesus said to the crowd,
'No one can come to me
unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me,
and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets:
They will all be taught by God:
and to hear the teaching of the Father,
and learn from it,
is to come to me.
Not that anybody has seen the Father,
except the one who comes from God: he has seen the Father.
I tell you most solemnly,
everybody who believes has eternal life.'

9 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 7:37-39

Fountains of living water shall flow.

Jesus cried out:

‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to me!

Let the man come and drink who believes in me!’

As scripture says:

‘From his breast shall flow fountains of living water.’

He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive.

10 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 9:1-7

He went off and washed, and came away with his sight restored.

As he went along, Jesus saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?’ ‘Neither he nor his parents sinned,’ Jesus answered, ‘he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

‘As long as the day lasts I must carry out the work of the one who sent me; the night will soon be here when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.’

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, ‘Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam’ (a name that means ‘sent’). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

11 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 15:1-11

Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty,

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘I am the true vine,
and my Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away,
and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear
even more.

You are pruned already,
by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home
in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by
itself, but must remain part of the vine,
neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine,
you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty;
for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not

remain in me
is like a branch that has been thrown away
he withers;
these branches are collected
and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt.

If you remain in me
and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you
shall get it.

It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit,
.and then you will be my disciples.
As the Father has loved me,
so I have loved you.
Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments
You will remain in my love,
just as I have kept my Father's commandments
and remain in his love.

I have told you this
so that my own joy maybe in you .and your joy be complete.'

12 A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 19:31-35

He pierced his side, and there came out blood and water.

It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the sabbath - since that sabbath was a day of special solemnity— the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and 'then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they found he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it — trustworthy evidence, and he speaks the truth — and he gives it so that you may believe as well.