

GOSPEL MESSAGE

January 11, 2026

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

Resistance Movements

Herod plotting to kill. John at the riverbank. Peter in Jerusalem. Judas at the table. Thomas behind closed doors. Nicodemus in the night. Family at home. Crowds in the streets. Quite a collection, but merely a sampling of a much longer list. There are plenty in the pages of the scriptures, and in the circles of our daily rounds: they—we—who are wannabe followers and wannabe saboteurs, the well-meaning and the conspiratorial, neighbors we like, others we refuse to trust, family we put up with (or don't), coworkers we admire, mentors we respect, activists we fear, leaders we oppose. A lengthy list indeed. And this is what is shared among such a collection of souls: people standing in the way of, objecting to, arguing against Jesus. Road blockers.

Mystery floats in and over the murky baptismal ripples of the Jordan River. To this day, thousands throng to wade in those waters to receive, to remember, to renew, to celebrate baptism. Jesus came there too and was met by his cousin, the famous, wild, wandering baptizer, who tried to stop him. Make of John's protest what you will (humility, confusion, disagreement, panic, pride?), his inclination was to prevent Jesus' public repentance, Jesus' plain-to-be-seen-and-heard turning away from the expectations of the world order toward the divine imagination of God.

It is not always (more than likely rarely, though at times it surely is) evil intention that is the seed that grows to oppose God's invocation to take delight in merciful justice and breathe the spirit of righteousness. We clash, as John the Baptizer clashed (how often?), with heaven's hopes and blessings for all that God created in goodness, even as we are unmindful of our own dissent.

It is for us, in our moments and ways of objecting, that God—ever mindful of us—parts heaven's clouds, that we might see and hear the way of God's beloved Son.

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