

Parish of Blaris

Sunday 9 January 2022
The Baptism of the Lord

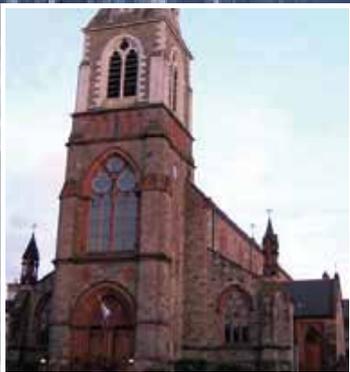
'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Mark 12:34

**ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH
LIVE WEBSTREAMING OF MASSES
MONDAY - SATURDAY: 10.00AM
SUNDAY: 10.00AM & 12 NOON**

**NEW ARRANGEMENTS RE. WEEKDAY MASSES,
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH CAN BE FOUND IN
BULLETIN NOTICES**

Please note many parishes in the Diocese have webcams installed which provide live coverage of various Masses taking place daily throughout the Diocese. These can be accessed by visiting www.downandconnor.org Links to Parish Webcams. Live Church webcam links: CHURCH SERVICES. TV & MCN MEDIA CHURCH WEBCAMS



Fr. Dermot McCaughan, PP: 028 9266 2341
Fr. Eamon Magorrian, CC: 028 9266 2348
Fr. Eddie McGee, Assistant Priest

Parish Office Opening Hours:
Monday-Friday 10.30am-4.00pm.
Closed 1.00pm-2.00pm.

Parish Office: 028 9266 0206 Fax: 028 9266 5690
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www.parishofblisburn.org

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Congregation stands

**Entrance Hymn or
Entrance Antiphon**

Cf. Mt 3:16-17

All: After the Lord was baptised,
the heavens were opened,
and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove,
and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my
beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

GREETING

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Priest: Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins,
and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred
mysteries.

Priest: Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins:
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest: Lord Jesus, you feed us with your body and blood:
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

GLORIA

All: **Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the
Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

THE COLLECT

Priest: Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Priest: Almighty ever-living God,
who, when Christ had been baptized in the River
Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him,

solemnly declared him your beloved Son,
grant that your children by adoption,
reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
may always be well pleasing to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Congregation Sits

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

40:1-5. 9-11

‘Console my people, console them’
says your God.
‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem
and call to her
that her time of service is ended,
that her sin is atoned for,
that she has received from the hand of the Lord
double punishment for all her crimes.’

A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness
a way for the Lord.
Make a straight highway for our God
across the desert.
Let every valley be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
let every cliff become a plain,
and the ridges a valley;
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all mankind shall see it;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’

Go up a high mountain,
joyful messenger to Zion.
Shout with a loud voice,
joyful messenger to Jerusalem.
Shout without fear,
say to the towns of Judah,
‘Here is your God.’
Here is the Lord coming with power,
his arm subduing all things to him.
The prize of his victory is with him,
his trophies all go before him.
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms,
holding them against his breast
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

All: The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 103:1-2. 3-4. 24-25. 27-30. R v.1

(R) **Bless the Lord, my soul!
Lord God, how great you are.**

1. Lord God, how great you are,
clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in a robe!
You stretch out the heavens like a tent. **(R)**
2. Above the rains you build your dwelling.
You make the clouds your chariot,
you walk on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers
and flashing fire your servants. **(R)**
3. How many are your words, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your riches.

There is the sea, vast and wide,
with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great and small. **(R)**

4. All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.
You give it, they gather it up:
you open your hand, they have their fill. **(R)**
5. You take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of the earth. **(R)**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus 21:11-14; 3:4-7

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

When the kindness and love of God our saviour for mankind were revealed, it was not because he was concerned with any righteous actions we might have done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own compassion that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and by renewing us with the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our saviour. He did this so that we should be justified by his grace, to become heirs looking forward to inheriting eternal life.

All: The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Congregation stands

ACCLAMATION Cf. Lk 3:16

All: Alleluia, alleluia!
Someone is coming, said John,
someone greater than I.
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit
and with fire. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Priest: The Lord be with you.
All: **And with your spirit.**
Priest: A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Mark 12:28-34
All: **Glorify to you, O Lord.**

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptize you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

All: The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Congregation sits

HOMILY

Congregation stands

THE CREED

All: **I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the
Father; through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,**

(bow your head up to the words 'and became man')

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of
the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Congregation sits

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Procession

*The gifts of bread and wine which will become the Lord's body
and blood are brought to the altar.*

The celebrant raises the host on the paten saying:

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.

All: **Blessed be God for ever.**

*The celebrant pours wine and a little water into the
chalice, saying quietly:*

Priest: By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

*The celebrant then raises the chalice above the
altar and says:*

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

Bowing, the celebrant says quietly:

Priest: With humble spirit and contrite heart
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day
be pleasing to you, Lord God.

Then the celebrant washes his hands, saying quietly:

Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and
yours may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

**All: May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your
hands for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Priest: Accept, O Lord, the offerings
we have brought to honour the revealing of your
beloved Son, so that the oblation of your faithful
may be transformed into the sacrifice of him
who willed in his compassion
to wash away the sins of the world.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen

Congregation stands

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

Priest: The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right and just.

PREFACE (Baptism of the Lord)

Priest: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,

For in the waters of the Jordan
you revealed with signs and wonders a new
Baptism, so that through the voice that came down
from heaven we might come to believe in your
Word dwelling among us, and by the Spirit's
descending in the likeness of a dove
we might know that Christ your Servant
has been anointed with the oil of gladness
and sent to bring the good news to the poor.

And so, with the Powers of heaven,
we worship you constantly on earth,
and before your majesty without end we acclaim:

ACCLAMATION

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Congregation kneels

Priest: You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
and all you have created rightly gives you praise,
for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
by the power and working of the Holy Spirit,
you give life to all things and make them holy,
and you never cease to gather a people to yourself,
so that from the rising of the sun to its setting
a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you:
by the same Spirit graciously make holy
these gifts we have brought to you for consecration,
that they may become the Body and + Blood
of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed
he himself took bread,
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR
MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Priest: The mystery of faith.

**All: Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

Priest: Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate
the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son,
his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into
heaven, and as we look forward to his second
coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and
living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church
and, recognising the sacrificial Victim by whose
death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant
that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood
of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may
become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us an eternal offering to you,
so that we may obtain an inheritance with your
elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her spouse,
with your blessed Apostles and glorious
Martyrs with Saint Patrick and with all the Saints,
on whose constant intercession in your presence we
rely for unailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray,
O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the
world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity
your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant
Francis our Pope and N. our Bishop, the Order of
Bishops, all the clergy, and the entire people you
have gained for your own.

Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world. To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom. There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory through Christ our Lord, through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.

Priest: Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Congregation stands

THE COMMUNION RITE

Priest: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
All: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

All: **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*Congregation kneels
The celebrant says quietly:*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, through your Death gave life to the world, free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood, from all my sins and from every evil; keep me always faithful to your commandments, and never let me be parted from you.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All: **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Priest: May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

Priest: May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Jn 1:32. 34

All: **Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.**

Purifying the chalice the celebrant says quietly:

What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Congregation kneels

Priest: Let us pray. Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord, that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten Son, we may be your children in name and in truth. Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Priest: The Lord be with you.
All: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: May God, source and origin of all blessing, grant you grace, pour out his blessing in abundance, and keep you safe from harm throughout the year.

All: **Amen**

Priest: May he give you integrity in the faith, endurance in hope, and perseverance in charity with holy patience to the end.

All: **Amen**

Priest: May he order your days and your deeds in his peace, grant your prayers in this and in every place, and lead you happily to eternal life.

All: **Amen**

Priest: And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All: **Amen**

Then the celebrant, with hands joined and facing the people, says:

Priest: Go forth, the Mass is ended.
All: **Thanks be to God.**



TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

“Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own Baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove.

And a voice came from heaven,
‘You are my Son, the Beloved: My favour rests on you’.

Luke 3:21–22

Open the heavens almighty Father, and pour out your spirit upon your people. Renew the power of our baptismal cleansing and fill us with zeal for good deeds. Let us hear your voice once again, that we may recognize in your beloved Son our hope in inheriting eternal life. Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendour of eternal light, God forever and ever. Amen.

We pray for our dead:

Month’s Mind: Sean McPoland: Sheila McNally: Justyn Zalewski.

Anniversaries: Annie McDonnell: Rodger Hannon: Robert Graham: Thomas McGauran(Sen): Canon John Robertson: Fr James Smyth: Susan Hughes: Brigid Hughes: Patrick McCaughan: Fr Desmond Davey: Hugh Eadie: Jane Brown: James Burns: Peter Mallon: Margaret McKeown: Anne Donnelly: Cornelius McCaugherty: Susan & Michael Cunningham: Margaret & Elizabeth Nolan: John & Mary McGurn: Kathleen & Robert Norwood: John Turley: Jack Kerr: Jimmy Kernaghan: Kevin Matier: Patrick & Gertrude Adair. May they rest in peace

IN THE CONFUSION OF MY LIFE

Lord, like the sun peering through a confusion of trees,
bringing light and sense, shine your love into the confusion of my life to give it meaning.

When my vision is blurred, and nothing seems to focus,
and my spirit dims low, Lord, still shine through, with the gentle glow of your presence.
When I face trials and difficulties, Lord, encourage me never to cease seeking your light.
Lord, shine through the confusion of my life. Amen.



ST ALOYSIUS PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY UNIT:

Given COVID, the Department of Education has asked schools to exercise caution and take a very considered approach to Open Days and school visits.

If new parents wish to have a tour of the school and an overview of admissions, please contact Mrs Catherine Milne to arrange a date and time: cmilne244@c2kni.net /9266 2293.

Applications OPEN on the E.A. website on MONDAY 10 JANUARY at 12noon
and CLOSE on FRIDAY 28 JANUARY at 12noon.

ST. LOUISE’S COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE invites you to join our Virtual Open Night Tour on our website www.stlouises.org.uk The Virtual Open Night Tour will be launched on Monday 19th January, 2022.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Lisburn would like to thank all the parishioners for their very kind donations and words of encouragement in response to our Christmas 2021 Campaign. Because of your overwhelming support we were able to bring comfort and joy to hundreds of individuals and families who had contacted us for help. We are blessed to have so many generous parishioners who continue to support SVP and allow us to carry out this service in your name. Many thanks on behalf of all our Members.
Regards, Damian French, President.



Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible

The Bible is at the heart of our faith and our relationship with God. Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but many people find it hard to even begin. Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible is an 8 week online programme written by Jeff Cavins and facilitated by the Living Church office. Course participants will receive a resource pack and connect online for a time of teaching, discussion and prayerful reflection.

There are three groups available

Wednesday Morning at 11am beginning on Wednesday 12th January

Wednesday Evening at 7pm beginning on Wednesday 12th January

Monday Evening at 7pm beginning on Monday 17th January

To register you can complete an online form <https://forms.office.com/r/g3FWFK5x8w>
or e-mail a.steen@downandconnor.org

Come and join us for a programme will give you a way to read the bible, understand it and so experience its life changing power.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MISSIONARY APPEAL

Thank you for your generous response to our Christmas Missionary appeal. Donations are still very welcome – appeal will close Sunday 30 January 2022.

Below please see extract from Dominican Sisters, Zambia whose projects have benefitted from your previous generosity.

Dear Parishioners of St. Patrick's, Lisburn:

Very special Season Greetings! I hope you are well and that the Parish was not too badly affected by the Virus. Only God knows where all this will end.

We are very grateful that so far Corona has not yet discovered the children at St. Anthony's. We are very strict as far as visitors are concerned, no outside entertainment etc. The children miss all that, but it is better to be safe than to be sorry! Let me wish you and all the parishioners a grace filled Christmas Season and God's Blessing and Protection for the New Year.

With gratitude for all your kindness and generous assistance,

Yours sincerely,

Sr. Philomena O.P., Zambia



The Children's Village does not receive state support and is dependent on people with a heart to 'alleviate the plight of others'. We ask for God's blessing every day for all those who accompany our work with prayer and financial help. May the world soon be freed from Corona and the aftermath!

Gospel Commentary

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptise you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus is there anonymously in the crowd, coming forward with the rest to meet the famous John the Baptist. It is impossible for us to see him as an anonymous person; to us he stands out from every crowd and from the whole human race: above them, beyond them; we can't imagine him not yet majestic. But there he is, the village man, Jesus, known only to his family and neighbours. He is not yet famous.

There is only one famous man there: John the Baptist. When you see a famous person among the crowds you notice that there is nearly always something false about it: he or she is looking for something, votes or applause or some other sort of ego-stroking. But John the Baptist wasn't looking for anything; he was delivering! He was delivering a verbal lashing of extraordinary severity, calling the crowd 'a brood of vipers.' Jesus is there, watching, listening, anonymous. He is indistinguishable from the brood of vipers. He is one of us. This is nothing new for him; this is how he has been all the thirty years of his life.

But this meeting with John the Baptist is a turning point. Something happened. He experienced the Spirit, and it is described in the kind of language that mystics have used throughout the ages to describe their union with God: 'You are my son, the beloved.'

Have you ever known that experience, in your very bones: God speaking to you (in some sense), 'You are my son, my daughter, the beloved?' If you experience God at all how could it be otherwise? God is love.

Even the thundering 19th-century preacher, Spurgeon, became quiet in front of today's gospel passage. He wrote: "The wings of the dove are as soft as they are swift. Quietness seems essential to many spiritual operations; the Lord is in the still small voice, and like the dew, His grace is distilled in silence." The unshakeable intimacy with his Father that Jesus demonstrated throughout the rest of his life bears witness to his experience of God's Spirit.

Was he now somehow 'above' the crowd? Would he no longer queue up with them? On the contrary. He was now more than ever one of them. He spent the rest of his life seeking out "the weak, the sick, the wounded, the strayed, the lost" (see Ezekiel 34). He was for the lost sheep, the outcast, the sinner. This has ever since been the mark of true greatness. Among us human beings (and not only in the farmyard) there is usually a well-enforced pecking order: people who climb up a step are sure to make it visible in some way, and sometimes they will even move into a different circle of friends and abandon the old circle. But Jesus never abandons the abandoned. Again the mighty Spurgeon: "Gentleness is a sure result of the Spirit's transforming power: hearts touched by Him are meek and lowly henceforth and for ever."

Can language convey this? I know a man who conveys it better than words ever could. When he is talking with you (or, much more often, listening) and someone interrupts, he totally ignores the interruption. His attention is unwavering. Nothing else exists for him at that moment, and you know that he would stop at nothing to help you, and there is not the slightest hint of ego in it - he has no agenda of his own. This is a rare quality. People know instinctively that he is a man of God. In case you've never met one, that's what meeting a saint is like.

If meeting a saint is like that, what must it be like to meet Jesus himself?

Fr Donagh O'Shea, O.P.,
www.goodnews.ie

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