

Anglican Diocese of Ottawa
Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Metcalfe
The Feast of John The Baptist
June 25, 2023
Reverend Michael Fleming

Fr. Michael: As we gather this new day to celebrate the life and ministry of John the Baptizer, the patron saint of Canada, we acknowledge that the places we call home and our sacred space at Holy Trinity lie on the unceded territory of our first nations and the Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples.

People: **May our striving for reconciliation in this beautiful county we all call “home” lead to greater understanding and cooperation between all the peoples of Canada. Amen**

Fr. Michael: Listen! I will share with you a mystery – we will not all die but we all will be changed!

People: **Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!**

Fr. Michael: God in Christ is the victor. Victory requires effort and struggle. As we pray for and strive towards the full visible unity in the Church Universal, we – and the traditions to which we belong – will be changed, transformed and conformed to the likeness of Christ. Christians should want to make this effort together without triumphalism and in humility, serving God and all our neighbours according to the example Jesus lived. In striving for unity, this is the attitude we desire to ask of God together.

Fr. Michael: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: We are a people gathered as those who responded to John were on the shores of the Jordan. As those called, we pray, “Almighty God,

People: **to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: To be a disciple, an apostle, a servant of Jesus enables us to sing out, “Glory to God in the highest,

People: **and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. 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.**

Fr. Michael: ALMIGHTY God, you called John the Baptist to give witness to the coming of your Son and to prepare his way. Give all your people the wisdom to see your purpose and the openness to hear your will, that we too may witness to Christ's coming and thus help to prepare his way; through Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Fr. Michael: Almighty and everliving God, who fulfilled the promises of Easter by sending us your Holy Spirit and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal, keep us in the unity of your Spirit so that every tongue may tell of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Reader: A reading from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:1-11) Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

The Word Of The Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: The God who speaks "Comfort" to us calls us here; the God who addresses us with tenderness meets us here; the God who guides us with gentleness cares for us here. We come to prepare a way for the Lord; we come ready ourselves for the transformation of our lives, for the glory of God will be revealed and all people shall see it.

Alleluia. (Moira Laidlaw from Liturgies Online)

Reader: Our psalm in celebration of St. John is taken from Psalm 85 (Psalm 85: 7-13)

Show us your mercy, O Lord, *

All: **and grant us your salvation.**

Reader: I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, *

All: **for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to**

him.

Reader: Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *

All: **that his glory may dwell in our land.**

Reader: Mercy and truth have met together; *

All: **righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

Reader: Truth shall spring up from the earth, *

All: **and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

Reader: The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, *

All: **and our land will yield its increase.**

Reader: Righteousness shall go before him, *

All: **and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.**

Reader: A reading from the Book of Acts (Acts 13: 14-26) From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.' "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.

The Word of the Lord

People: **Thanks be to God**

Reader: You call us to be your light in the darkness, your voice in the wilderness, you hope for the hopeless. You give us strength in our weakness; peace and gentleness, words and boldness to proclaim more of you and less of ourselves.

Amen (John Birch from Faith and Worship)

Fr. Michael: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the Blessed St. Luke (St. Luke 1:57-80)

People: **Glory be to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Fr. Michael: When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him. His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

This is the very Gospel of Christ.

People: **Praise be to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Homily

Fr. Michael: Faith means betting your life that something is true. In the Church, we affirm who we are and whose we are as we say, “I believe in one God,

People: **the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Reader: God, when the time was ripe and the hour had come, you sent your servant John into the wilderness to proclaim the coming of the one true Messiah. “Make way; Repent” he cried, “be baptized for the salvation of our God is at hand.” John came to bear witness to the true light, the Messiah, the Son of God. He told them to wake up, to watch and wait for the hour is near when the Son of God will arise.

People: **Lord, help us to bear witness to and for the Light.**

Reader: God, on this the Feast of John the Baptist, we have heard your servant crying out to us in the wilderness of our lives; we have heard your call to repentance and restoration and we want to respond. We have heard you offering the forgiveness of our sin and we want to hear your words of mercy spoken over each of us. We have heard you baptizing with water and with the Holy Spirit and with fire: cleanse us and make us new. We have heard that you are ushering in a reign of peace and we want to see your kingdom when it comes.

People: **Lord, help us to bear witness to and for the Light.**

Reader: Lord, we pray for those persons and institutions which are Light-bearers for you, remembering especially today Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as Staff at Ascension House, St. Paul's, Renfrew and the Reverend John Stopa, The Parish of West Quebec and the Venerable Eric Morin and the Reverend Susan Lewis, and St. Thomas the Apostle, Stittsville and the Reverend Lee Lambert. Lord, your world stands in dire need of your presence. We pray for Lisa and Owen. Be present to all those who are suffering in mind, body or spirit at this time, remembering particularly Freeman, Marjorie, Louise, Myra, Beth, Irene, Howard, Jeanette, Richard, Deb, Sarah, Zachariah, Cheryl and be with all the caretakers and caregivers who make life more bearable for those who have such great burdens to carry. We pray for all who have died especially Roy. Bless those who mourn, eternal God, with the comfort of your love. Everywhere we look, we see need for you – for your coming, your restoration, your peace, your transformation.

People: **Lord, help us to bear witness to and for your light.**

Reader: On this, the Baptist's Day, we pray that all nations will know your truth and your light; we pray for the poor and the dispossessed, the refugee and the homeless, the stateless and the persecuted – that they may feel the warmth of your love over them. We pray for those who are spiritually hunger and who thirst for your renewing water.

People: **Lord, help us to bear witness to and for your light.**

Reader: God, the hour of your coming draws near. Make us ready, Lord: in our hearts and minds and souls. Come Lord Jesus and be with us now; come and do not delay. Even so, Lord – Maranatha! (from Literature and Liturgy)

Fr. Michael: Every notion we have about power, success, wealth, success or achievement God takes and tosses out the window. More importantly, God comes to us, removing our sin and our failures and our expectations, so we may have new life. Join us as we pray,

People: **We confess that we are not the people you hope us to be. The very ones you favour, we too often ignore or ridicule; the ones you knock off their pedestals are the ones we admire and try to emulate. We are so focused on having more and more that we risk being sent away emptyhanded. Forgive us Mighty God, and look with your grace upon us. We want to live secure in your love; we want to offer peace for our world in your name; we seek to do your will as did Jesus our Lord and Saviour in whose name we pray. Amen**

Fr. Michael: Even now – yes, even at this very moment – God comes to us bringing hope, forgiveness and grace as freely offered gifts. May we open our hearts to the presence of the

God who lies within us and receive the gifts which we have been offered. Then, may we give them away with abandon in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

And may the peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: God of our salvation, accept all that we offer you this day and free us to worship you without fear, in holiness and righteousness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Fr. Michael: Supplementary Eucharistic Prayer 1

The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Fr. Michael: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Fr. Michael: Holy God, Lover of creation, we give you thanks and praise for in the ocean of your steadfast love you bear us and place the song of your Spirit in our hearts. When we turn from your love and defile the earth, you do not abandon us. Your Spirit speaks through Huldah and Micah, through prophets, sages, and saints in every age, to confront our sin and reveal the vision of your new creation. Joining in the song of the universe we proclaim your glory saying:

People: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.**

Fr. Michael: Gracious God, in the fullness of time you sent Jesus the Christ to share our fragile humanity. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection you open the path from brokenness to health, from fear to trust, from pride and conceit to reverence for you. Rejected by a world that could not bear the Gospel of life, Jesus knew death was near. His head anointed for burial by an unknown woman, Jesus gathered together those who loved him. He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it and gave it to his friends, saying, "Take and eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine, gave you thanks, and said "Drink this all of you, this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." And now we gather at this table in response to his commandment, to share the bread and cup of Christ's undying love, and to proclaim our faith.

All: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Fr. Michael: Breathe your Holy Spirit, the wisdom of the universe, upon these gifts that we bring to you: this bread, this cup, ourselves, our souls and bodies, that we may be signs of your love for all the world and ministers of your transforming purpose. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, Creator of all, and we bless your holy name for ever.

All: **Amen.**

Fr. Michael: As Jesus has gifted through the Spirit Church, we pray, Our Father,
People: **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. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

People: **We, being many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread.**

Fr. Michael: The gifts of God for all the children of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

WE SHARE THE GIFT OF EUCHARIST WITH ONE ANOTHER.

Fr. Michael: We thank you Lord for your word and your table which give us knowledge of our salvation. Your compassion breaks upon us like the dawn; guide now our feet into the way of your peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

All: **Amen**

All: **Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fr. Michael: Lift up your hearts, people of God, for the Lord has looked with favour upon us and is sending us his beloved Son. He is raising up a mighty Saviour in the house of his servant David. God is showing the mercy he promised to our foremothers and our forefathers and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath he swore to Sarah and Abraham, that we might serve him without fear. Come, let us go before the Lord following John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord. Come, let us worship the Lord and listen to the voice of the one crying in the wilderness. Let us remember that whose we are is shown not as much by what we say as by what we do.

Fr. Michael: Risen Lord, light of all people, who on the third day rose again from the dead, come and stand among us: dispel the darkness with your celestial brightness so that we may walk before you in the day as children of light, to the glory of your name Risen Lord with the Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever more.

All: **Amen**

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