The Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3.15-17, 21-22)

"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*'*."

The theme for this Sunday is The Baptism of Christ, and the Gospel relates the story of Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan. An essential milestone - enabling Him to prepare to take responsibility for the sins of the world; baptism was an important prerequisite to the start of this ministry. Finally, Jesus - Son of God - could truly claim to now be 'one of the people' - both human and divine…

As a human being, the task that lay before Jesus was incredibly onerous - He knew He would face rejection by many 'ordinary people', and often-violent opposition from the authorities. He also knew that He would have to face execution. So baptism was a necessary foundation for all this, and an opportunity to fully receive God's affirmation - '***this is my son, my beloved, in who I am well pleased***'.

Thought for the week… We might sometimes wonder what all this have to do our baptism?

Well, when we were baptised in the name of Jesus, He became one **with us**, and we became one **with Him**. And because of that **we, too**, are God's beloved children, with whom God is well pleased. And it's that message that can give us the courage to live our lives for Jesus, and entrust our lives to him.

The problem, of course, is that in a world-full of challenges and concerns, we may not always believe it. And I guess it's true to

say that we all might doubt God's love for us now and again, especially during such difficult and challenging times.

But celebrating the baptism of Jesus should remind us that:

- He was (and always will be) God's beloved
- And that we are His beloved, too, no matter what happens in 'the world around us'.

Lord during these challenging times, help us to see everyone as God's beloved, too. We pray for opportunity and courage to make your Word known to those around us who may never hear this unless they hear it from us, as faithful disciples of Jesus. Amen