

# To the Heights

Year A FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Download from [www.waterfordlismore.ie/resources](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/resources) or subscribe to receive by email!



**SPOTLIGHT!**



Pope Leo XIV records a special message for the 26,000 young people attending SEEK Conferences last weekend in America!

**HEAR!** Sunday Gospel

Matthew 3:13-17

If you don't have a Bible handy, click here to access Sunday Mass Readings!



**TUNE!**



Your Plans for Us  
Eleventh Hour Worship



**GROW**



**WATCH NOW**

Pray with Fr. Josh Johnson:  
The Litany of Belovedness  
by Sarah Kroger



**WATCH NOW**

**WEEKLY CHALLENGE:**

Spend time this week praying, journaling and committing to the kind of person God wants you to be at the end of this year: what virtues, decisions, growth, pruning, change will that require? when you're ready, commit to your first 1%, and then repeat daily till the end of the year! keeping a journal, a written record, will help you.

**PRAYER INTENTION!**

For those who are trying to make positive changes in their lives but are struggling to persevere.



FR MIKE SCHMITZ

**WATCH:**



"Three things that God loves dearly: true faith in Him with a pure heart, a simple life with religion, and generosity inspired by charity."

**GAMECHANGERS!**

ST ITA

15th January



The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints and heroes, or as we like to call them Game Changers! Check them out on our web page!



**REFLECT**

- Where does this Gospel story take place?
- Why did John not want to baptise Him?
- Why did John give in to Jesus?
- How did baptism take place at the time?
- What happened when Jesus was baptised?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted to get baptised, even though He didn't need to?



**PRAY**

Father God, my Father, You have a loving plan for my whole life. I do not know exactly where You want to lead me, but grant me the grace to trust in Your plan. Show me now who it is You want me to be at the end of this year. Teach me daily what I need to do, to become that person, the best version of myself. Help me to commit to small steps faithfully, to grow 1% closer daily to that vision.



[www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry)



AscendWaterfordLismoreYM



ascendwaterfordlismore.ym



Ascend Youth Ministry

## HIS WORD & MY LIFE!



## RESPOND!



What do you think God could be saying to you in this Gospel? What speaks to your heart? Maybe it raises questions, maybe it's a little uncomfortable, maybe it offers hope... what matters is that we are open to hearing God speak to us individually.

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The story of the Baptism of Jesus might seem simple enough until we start probing a little deeper.

Why was John baptising people in the River Jordan?

So they could repent of their sins and prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Did Jesus need to repent of any sins? Of course not, He is God, and He was the coming Messiah. So why did he get baptised?

Jesus' baptism was symbolic. Jesus, as God, actually sanctified the waters by His descent into them, rather than needing to be cleansed of any sin. His baptism was for our sake, not for His. He chose to embrace and represent the human condition which is broken and in need of forgiveness and healing, and this was symbolised at his baptism. His public ministry is about to begin, and at that moment, the Father says, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you." The will of Jesus was completely united with the Will of the Father. If we want to become the person God is calling us to be, we also need to unite our will to His, and follow His guidance for each day and each action of our lives!



## FIND THE WORDS FROM TODAY'S GOSPEL IN THE WORDSEARCH!

## PUZZLE

- baptised
- Beloved
- demands
- dissuade
- dove
- favour
- Galilee
- heavens
- Jesus
- John
- Jordan
- opened
- rests
- righteousness
- Son
- Spirit
- suddenly
- voice
- water



## DOODLE PRAYER

Reflect on the scripture quote and allow thoughts and images that come to you to form part of your doodle prayer: it could be people or situations that need prayer or even areas you might need to change in. Certain words or phrases might stand out for you. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your heart as you pray and doodle!

"This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him."



CLICK HERE FOR SOME RELAXING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC  
TOP WORSHIP SONGS OF ALL TIME! - INSTRUMENTAL WORSHIP GUITAR | JON SNODGRASS



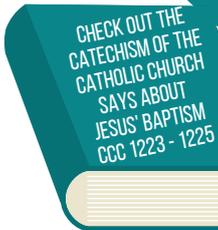


Take Action!  
Take a Step!  
Move!



YEAR A: MATTHEW 3:13-17  
YEAR B: MARK 1:7-11  
YEAR C: LUKE 3: 15-16, 21-22

Therefore, my dear brothers & sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.  
1 Cor 15:58



# THE 1% RULE

THE SECRET TO STICKING TO NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!



HAVE YOU MADE ANY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS? HAVE YOU MADE THEM IN THE PAST?  
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO STAY FAITHFUL TO THEM?

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WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "THE SECRET TO STICKING TO A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW.



What is it about the Rocky movies that Fr Mike finds so inspiring?

What effect did seeing Rocky IV have on Fr Mike and his siblings?

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CLICK HERE TO SEE THE ROCKY MONTAGE FR MIKE REFERENCES AND SEE WHAT YOU THINK!



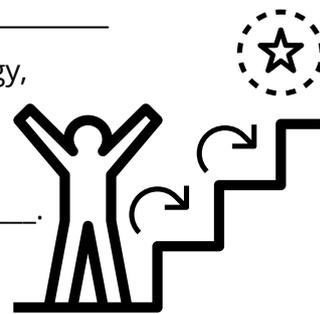
## INSPIRATION ON ITS OWN IS NOT ENOUGH FOR CHANGE TO HAPPEN...



What cycling team did Dave Brailsford coach to victory in just three years?

Brailsford credited "mimimal aggregate gain" as his winning strategy, also known as *The* \_\_\_\_\_ *Rule*.

In simple terms this means we try to improve ourselves by \_\_\_ % every \_\_\_\_\_. Small steps that help us move towards where we want to be.



This Rule demands we have a clear sense of \_\_\_\_\_.

For Christians that means asking "What kind of person does God \_\_\_\_\_ me to be by the \_\_\_\_\_ of this \_\_\_\_\_?"

To discover this, Fr Mike invites us to do two things: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.



# goal:

WHEN WE HAVE A CLEAR VISION, WE CAN DECIDE ON THE SMALL 1% IMPROVEMENTS THAT BRING US CLOSER TO THE VISION GOD HAS PLANTED IN OUR HEARTS.

Being faithful does not necessarily mean having a lot of faith and feeling it a lot.



- **Faithful means:** Keeping your \_\_\_\_\_ and keeping them \_\_\_\_\_.
- **Consistency** will beat \_\_\_\_\_ every time!

# THE 1% RULE

YEAR A: MATTHEW 3:13-17  
YEAR B: MARK 1:7-11  
YEAR C: LUKE 3: 15-16, 21-22

AM I CONSISTENT IN CHOOSING THE LORD? AM I CONSISTENT IN REPENTING WHEN I FALL?  
EVEN IN THE MIDST OF FAILURE AND SIN, DO I REMAIN FAITHFUL? DO I CHOOSE GOD WHEN I FALL?

## STILL FEELING A BIT MEH? IT'S NOT ABOUT YOUR EMOTIONS!

If you are feeling lukewarm and don't care, what does Fr Mike recommend?

Remember: your intellect and will can guide your \_\_\_\_\_.



READ: MATTHEW 3:13-17 | MARK 1:7-11  
LUKE 3: 15-16, 21-22

The story of the Baptism of Jesus might seem simple enough until we start probing a little deeper. Why was John baptising people in the River Jordan? So they could repent of their sins and prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Did Jesus need to repent of any sins? Of course not, He is God, and He was the coming Messiah. So why did he get baptised? Jesus' baptism was symbolic. Jesus, as God, actually sanctified the waters by His descent into them, rather than needing to be cleansed of any sin. His baptism was for our sake, not for His. He chose to embrace and represent the human condition which is broken and in need of forgiveness and healing, and this was symbolised at his baptism. His public ministry is about to begin, and at that moment, the Father says, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you." The will of Jesus was completely united with the Will of the Father. If we want to become the person God is calling us to be, we also need to unite our will to His, and follow His guidance for each day and each action of our lives!

**"God has placed a vision of your life for who he wants you to be at the end of this year.**

**Choosing that faithfully, just 1% every day, ends up resulting in the kind of person God wants you to be."**

**(Fr Mike Schmitz)**

YOUR MISSION!

SPEND TIME THIS WEEK PRAYING, JOURNALLING AND COMMITTING TO THE KIND OF PERSON GOD WANTS YOU TO BE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR: WHAT VIRTUES, DECISIONS, GROWTH, PRUNING, CHANGE WILL THAT REQUIRE? WHEN YOU'RE READY, COMMIT TO YOUR FIRST 1%, AND THEN REPEAT DAILY TILL THE END OF THE YEAR! KEEPING A JOURNAL, A WRITTEN RECORD, WILL HELP YOU.



MAKE TIME FOR GOD

Father God, my Father, You have a loving plan for my whole life. I do not know exactly where You want to lead me, but grant me the grace to trust in Your plan. Show me now who it is You want me to be at the end of this year. Teach me daily what I need to do, to become that person, the best version of myself. Help me to commit to small steps faithfully, to grow 1% closer daily to that vision.



## STARTER PLAYLIST AS YOU REFLECT ON THE YEAR AHEAD

- Your Plans for Us - Eleventh Hour Worship
- When God's Perfect Plans - Resound Worship
- I will trust - Elevation Worship
- Your Promises - Elevation Worship



- The Change in Me - Casting Crowns
- I will follow You - Kristene di Marco
- I choose to worship - Rend Collective
- Good to me - Audrey Assad



**New Year's Resolutions ... for Me or for God? LITTLE BY LITTLE w/Fr Columba Jordan CFR**



**The Key to Self-Mastery: Improvements by Aggregation of Marginal Gains**



# DOODLE PRAYER



Allow yourself some space to sit and reflect on your future. You might prefer to play some music in the background, or just sit in silence. Read the words of Thomas Merton below and pray with them. Allow ideas, thoughts and images that come to you as you pray to form part of your doodle prayer. What are the areas of your life you need to invite Jesus into? What situations, relationships do you need His help with? What decisions do you have to make? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your heart and your thoughts. This is a particular space you are creating for God in your life today. Speak, and listen.

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you

does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this

you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though

I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

[CLICK HERE FOR SOME RELAXING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC](#)

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -

