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## Parish Prayer Concerns

- **Recently Deceased:** Frank Cardaci, Mario Cechini;
- **Anniversaries:** Shian Coggins, Charles Richards, Michael O'Brien, Elizabeth Delphechitra de Silva;
- **Deceased:** Barbara Hunt, Kay Falla, Derrick De Souza, Bosco Lu, Fred Ienco, Trevor Burnaby;
- **The Sick of the Parish:** Vera Woods, Eamon & Lisa Delaney, Joe Corbett, and all who are in need of our prayers.

**"...anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to Him."**

### **A Reflection—Fr. Tadgh Tierney, o.c.d**

*In the earliest tradition of the Church, especially in the East, the Lord's Baptism was celebrated at Epiphany and was called the Feast of the Holy Lights; during this time it was customary to confer the sacrament of baptism. Baptism was consequently known as 'illumination' or 'enlightenment' and the new convert carried a lighted candle in procession. This ceremony is incorporated in the new rite of baptism.*

*Just over 1600 years ago St. Gregory Nazianzen, who was bishop near modern Istanbul, preached a series of sermons at Epiphany on Christ's baptism. Gregory explains that a candle was used in the ceremony to illustrate Christ's words: 'I am the light of the world'. (John) He writes, "Jesus comes up out of the water and raises up the whole world with him. He sees the heavens torn open that Adam has barred for himself and posterity, even as paradise was barred by the flaming sword, and the spirit coming to meet him, bears witness to the godhead they both share."*

*The liturgy tells us who this mysterious figure is, standing in line to be baptised by John. In the first reading from Isaiah we have the first of the famous 'servant songs'. The gospel of Matthew for this present Year One echoes the words of the song, "This is my son, the beloved my favour rests on him." This very close Isaiah: "My chosen one in whom my soul delights." (Son and Servant are two ancient titles for Jesus). 'Chosen one' is an alternative to 'beloved', and some scholars think that 'Son' was in the original Aramaic. Here we're being told to turn to Jesus Christ and listen to him - he is the gift of the Father to us.*

*The second reading today from the 'Acts of the Apostles' traces the ministry of Jesus back to his baptism when he was anointed 'with the Holy Spirit and with power'. This was the starting point for his ministry of reconciliation. By submitting to John's baptism Jesus has also made it easier for sinners to identify with him. Like the servant of Isaiah, Jesus brings forgiveness and peace.*

*All three synoptic gospels give us the account of the baptism of Jesus and they are read on successive years of the cycle. We see especially in Luke how the eminence of John the Baptist even overshadowed Jesus Himself in some people's minds. This led to a 'Baptist movement' in the early church. But none of the evangelists would have missed out on telling us about the significance of this event. The reason was that the baptism was also connected with the death of Jesus: "I have a baptism with which I must be baptised." (Mark 10). The Ministry of Jesus, his 'going about doing good' led Him straight to the Cross.*

*With the Baptism of the Lord the Christmas season closes. From now on we will follow the the Lord's footsteps in His ministry of inaugurating the Kingdom of God. After a few of the initial Sundays of the year it will be time to prepare for the high point in the life of Jesus - namely His journey to His passion and death and return to the Father.*