

ENTRANCE ANTIphon (or a hymn) All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to your name, O Most High!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 39)

ANTIPHON: Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

RESPONSE: Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will.

LECTOR: I waited, I waited for the Lord and he stooped down to me; he heard my cry. He put a new song into my mouth, praise of our God. **R.**

LECTOR: You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings, but an open ear. You do not ask for holocaust and victim. Instead, here am I. **R.**

LECTOR: In the scroll of the book it stands written that I should do your will. My God, I delight in your law in the depth of my heart. **R.**

LECTOR: Your justice I have proclaimed in the great assembly. My lips I have not sealed; you know it, O Lord. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He enabled those who accepted him to become the children of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIphon (or a hymn) You have prepared a table before me, and how precious is the chalice that quenches my thirst.

Or

We have come to know and to believe in the love that God has for us.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 49:3, 5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; John 1:29-34.

NEXT WEEK (3rd Sunday of Year A) Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3; Ps 26; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17; Matt 4:12-23

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Storytelling at its best



18 January 2026 2nd Sunday Year A

The best stories often have subtle structural elements hidden from direct view. George Lucas, for example, built the six Star Wars films he produced according to an elaborate ring structure where both scenes and dialogue from the first three films are inverted and mirrored in the second half.

J K Rowling constructed the Harry Potter series according to the spiritual "logic" of alchemy and with overarching mirrored parallels a bit like Lucas. This deep structuration is an incredibly ancient and widespread way of storytelling. Holy Scripture is brimming full of configurations of similar kinds both small and large.

John's Gospel is no exception. I'll draw attention to one. The second half of Chapter One is composed of four "scenes": the Baptist's testimony about Jesus to the priests, Levites, and Pharisees from Jerusalem, the Baptist's testimony about Jesus' baptism (this week's gospel!), Andrew's testimony to his brother Peter, and Philip's testimony to Nathaniel.

The deep structural element I want to point out is the way the gospel relates these scenes to the next one, which is the wine miracle at the Wedding in Cana, the first "sign" that kicks off Jesus' ministry at the start of chapter two. (Six "signs" follow through the middle of the book, for a total of seven.)

Now, the second, third, and fourth of these testimonial scenes begin with the same phrase: "The next day..." The Cana story immediately following the fourth scene begins: "On the third day..." Four plus three is...seven.

The structural "key" to these "days" of Chapter One is the seven-day creation story. It is also the basis for the seven "signs," which layer onto that Creation theme the Exodus. (Moses' "signs" are the plagues that undo the creation culminating in the death of Egypt's firstborn sons, whereas Jesus' signs—from the wedding wine to the resurrection of Lazarus—are acts of renewing the creation, bringing the world to its glorious purpose, achieved through the sacrifice of God's own Son.) If you dare, ponder the deep parallel of water into blood in Egypt (Moses' first) and the eucharistic water into wine in Cana!

This also sheds light on this week's gospel, the second day of the initial seven, the Baptist's testimony about Jesus' baptism. Here John mentions a Lamb, a Dove, and a Son. Jesus is both the Lamb—like the Passover lamb during the exodus signs that "redeemed" the firstborn sons of Israel—and he is the Son, already sung about in the gospel's opening as the one who makes us children of God born out of the waters of death into life.

In the middle of the testimony, between these two images is the Dove, who is the Spirit, descending on Jesus in the waters of baptism. John testifies that Jesus' baptism is the restart of the creation's beginning when the Spirit hovered over the waters in Genesis. Our baptism into Jesus immerses us into this entire new creation/ultimate exodus motif. What does that mean?

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