

# The Junior Observer

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A Good News Story

## Heavens Open When Jesus is Baptized

Catholic News Service

**J**ohn the Baptist would cry out as he preached, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” He did not dress in fine clothing adorned with beautiful jewelry. Instead he wore clothing that had been made of camel hair with a leather belt clasped around his waist. Yet people came from all over Judea to listen to his sermons and to be baptized by him.

John is the man whose purpose in the ministry of Jesus was written about by the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’” But John was not boastful. He knew his work was only the beginning of a special work of God.



(CNS)

Although many people loved John, not everyone did. A group of Pharisees and Sadducees were in one of the crowds that had come to hear John. When John saw them, he called out to them. “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. ... Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

**Q&A**

**What did John say Jesus would baptize people with?**

**What happened in the heavens after Jesus was baptized?**

Read more about it in Mt 3.

John knew his words would anger his critics, but he was committed to serving God. “I am baptizing you with water, for repentance,” he said, “but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” He was talking about Jesus.

On a day like many others, John was baptizing people in the Jordan River. Jesus was in line

to be baptized. When he stood in front of John, John said, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”

Jesus nodded and answered, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” So John baptized Jesus.

As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened up and the Spirit of God descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. A voice from the sky declared, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

After his baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert where he was tempted by the devil. He triumphed over temptation by relying on the Scriptures, and then angels came and ministered to him.

## Share What's in Your Heart with Children in Peru

**T**his year, you have more time than usual to help the children in the Diocese of Chulucanas in Peru.

We usually launch our annual Heart to Heart project at the end of January because Lent often starts in February. But this year, Ash Wednesday isn't until March 5, so you have a whole extra month to decorate your hearts, collect your \$2, and send your donation to The Junior Observer.

Maybe you can decorate *two* pairs of hearts to help two children in Peru.

Fourteen years ago, Rita Prunuske, former president of the Rockford Deanery Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, and former Junior Observer editor Penny Wiegert heard that poor children in Peru were unable to attend school because they had no paper and pencils.

They decided to ask the children of the Rockford Diocese to help. So was born Heart to Heart — a program that links children of the Rockford Diocese to those in Chulucanas, Peru.

**Here's How You Can Help**

Decorate these double hearts and send them, with a \$2 donation for each pair, to The Junior Observer, Heart to Heart, P.O. Box 7044, Rockford, IL 61125. *Do not mount your hearts on other paper because it adds to mailing costs.* The deadline for hearts and donations is **Good Friday, April 18.**

In addition to sending hearts and donations, our diocese has sent missionaries and helped build a church in the Diocese of Chulucanas. Since the program began, Heart to Heart has sent thousands of hearts, along with more than \$49,000, to help school children in Peru. Can you help this year?

*Heart to Heart ... De Corazón al Corazón*  
*Rockford — 2014 — Chulucanas*

