



Baptism of Luke Cameron Christopher Knezovich



Date: Saturday, December 21, 2024 | **Season:** Advent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Ezekiel 36:24-28

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 26:1, 2, 3, 13-14 | **Response:** Psalm 26:1a

Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6

Gospel Acclamation: John 8:12

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:35-40

Preached at: The Catholic Church of the Resurrection in Bryanston in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Today, we gather to celebrate a moment of profound joy and grace: the baptism of Luke Cameron Christopher Knezovich. This is a day of immense significance, not only for his parents Simone and Chris, or for Luke's godparents Richard and Priscalla, or for his extended family, but it is of immense significance for the entire Church. Through baptism, Luke is welcomed into the family of God, into the Mystical Body of Christ, and begins a lifelong journey of faith and love in relationship with Jesus Christ.

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the love and care Simone, Chris and Oliver have lavished on Luke since the day of his birth. In giving him his name, Simone and Chris bestowed upon him his first gift—a gift that reflects his unique identity and the deep love of his family whose name he bears. Today, Luke receives a greater gift—the gift of faith—as he is marked as a child of God and embraced by the family of faith.

Baptism is both a gift and a responsibility. It is the beginning of a spiritual journey, one that Luke will walk with the guidance of his parents, godparents, and the Christian community. This journey calls him to grow in love and knowledge of God, who lovingly calls each of us by name. As we read in Romans 6:4: “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too may live a new life.” Today, Luke's name is inscribed in heaven, and he begins his life as a follower of Christ.

Luke's name holds profound significance. "Luke" recalls the beloved physician, evangelist, and author of the Acts of the Apostles, a man who brought the light of Christ to the world through his writings. "Christopher", beyond being the name of his father, which will be a great honour and reminder for him, also means "Christ-bearer," a fitting name as we prepare our hearts during Advent, the season of waiting for Christ, the Light of the World. Luke's names remind us of his call to bring Christ's light to others as he grows in faith, and of his heritage and link to his family.

This Advent context is particularly meaningful. In this sacred season, we prepare to welcome Christ anew into our hearts and our world. Today, as Luke is baptized, he properly becomes a Christ-bearer, carrying the hope and love of Christ into the world. As we reflect on this, we might ask ourselves: How are we preparing our hearts to receive Christ? How have we this Advent nurtured the light of faith in our own lives?

Baptism is a profoundly beautiful sacrament. In this moment, Luke is formally introduced to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is marked with the sign of the cross, the symbol of our salvation, and anointed with holy oil as a priest, prophet, and king. The waters of baptism cleanse him of original sin and make him a new creation in Christ. He will be clothed in white, signifying purity and new life, and a candle will be lit to represent the light of faith that his parents and godparents promise to nurture until Luke is ready to tend it himself.

For each of us here, this is a moment to recall our own baptism. It is an opportunity to reflect on the faith we have received and to renew our commitment to live it out. As Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Baptism is not just a past event; it is a living reality that shapes who we are and calls us to be witnesses of Christ in the world.

Simone and Chris, by bringing Luke here today, you have asked the Church to baptize your son. In doing so, you have promised to raise him in the faith, teaching him to love God and neighbor. This is a sacred responsibility, and the Church stands with you, ready to support you in this mission. To Luke's godparents,

Richard and Priscilla, your role is vital. You are called to be spiritual guides and role models, helping to nurture Luke's faith and encouraging him to live out his baptismal promises, and to support the faith of Simone and Christopher as well.

As a community, we also have a role to play. We are here to witness this sacred moment and to pledge our support for Luke and his family. Faith is not lived in isolation but in communion with others. Let us rejoice with Simone, Chris, and their family, and commit ourselves to being a source of encouragement and love as Luke grows in faith.

In just a moment, we will pray for Luke, for his parents and godparents, and for all of us gathered here. We will ask God to bless Luke and to fill him with the grace of the Holy Spirit. We will call upon the saints to intercede for him and anoint him with the Oil of Catechumens to prepare him to receive new life in Christ. Then, through the waters of baptism, Luke will be born again as a child of God. He will be anointed with the Oil of Chrism, signifying his royal, priestly, and prophetic dignity, clothed in white, and his baptismal candle will be lit to symbolize the light of Christ.

Luke, one day you will hear these words and know how deeply loved and cherished you are by God and this community. May you grow in faith, love, and wisdom, always bearing the light of Christ to the world. And to each of us here, may we renew our commitment to live as children of God, nurturing the light of faith in our lives and being witnesses of Christ's love.

Let us now thank God for the gift of our baptism and pray for the grace to be faithful witnesses of His love. Together, let us ask God to pour out His blessings on Luke and to guide him on this beautiful journey of faith.

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