

January 8, 2024



Daily Reflections

WATERS OF LIFE

By Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ

Today's Gospel

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

MARK 1:7-11

Reflection

Can you imagine what Jesus must have been feeling when he heard his Father say, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased"? Picture yourself

hearing these same words as God created each of us and loves us throughout our lives. Allow these words to settle over you: “You are my beloved creation; with you I am well pleased.”

Jesus’ baptism is a milestone moment in his life as it marks the beginning of his public ministry. It points to all that John the Baptist has preached and embodied with his own life to set the scene for this transitional moment in the life of Jesus.

It provides us a rich and deeply personal reflection on our life as disciples and a time to reflect on what our baptism means to us today. Many of us were baptized as babies and most likely don’t recall our actual moment of baptism; what we do know is that it was the first sacrament we received and it marked our entry into the life of Christ and the Church.

Through the waters of baptism and the Word, we were cleansed from original sin. There were celebrations on our behalf as family and other loved ones recognized this significant moment in our lives and the lives of the faithful. The use of water in many of our rituals, prayers, and in liturgy reminds us, time and time again, of our life in the church and our call to follow Jesus as disciples on the way.

I’m often drawn to creeks, rivers, and oceans because the sounds, smells, and environment found in these places remind me of our Creator God. Listening to the sounds of a river flowing over rocks of all sizes, meandering around limbs that have fallen across the stream, symbolizes the power of water. It has the power to smooth rocks and boulders, to move trees that have fallen within its path, and to provide life-giving water to the plants and animals in need of its nutrients.

These are powerful images recapturing that moment of our baptism, when the life-giving water was gently poured upon our heads and our lives were forever changed. From this point on, our mission was to respond to the Spirit’s invitation in our lives and embody the values and call of our faith.

Jesus always points us toward the Father – do we respond to this call in our own lives? Do we embrace the mission to which Jesus continually invites us?

Waters of Life

O streams that gently flow from the mountains above, may you quench the thirsts of life that impeded our ability to stay the course of discipleship.

O rivers that yield both whitewater patches of fast-moving rapids and still, deep pockets of calm and beauty, may this be an image that reminds us of our

ever-present God.

O oceans of endless water, may the depth and breadth of your being remind us of the depth and breadth of the love God has for all of creation.

O streams that twist and turn through fields and forests, your clear waters provide relief from searing heat and remind us of the life-giving waters of our baptism.

O rivers that flow from melted snow and downpours of rain, you are a reminder of the steadfast love of God who remains with us through all the seasons of our life.

O oceans teeming with amphibious life, your beauty, mystery, and depth of being remind us that so much remains for us to discover as we catch only glimpses of the grandeur of God.





Photo by Sr. Jayne Helmlinger, CSJ in France

For Pondering

- How does the word "baptism" or "water" capture your life?
- Take in the words: You are my beloved creation; with you I am well pleased.

For Prayer

*Creator God,
may our lives exemplify our life in you.*

*Grant us the grace we need this day to be sources of life-giving waters
for those in need of your hope and love.
Amen.*

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