

# Water in the Liturgy Is a Reminder of Baptism

Kathy Kuczka

*Water changes things.* Have you ever noticed the physique of a swimmer? Swimmers tend to be broad in the shoulders and slim at the waist with arms and legs strengthened by their continual movement in the water. Swimmers surrender their bodies to the water, and as a result the water reshapes them.

## SIGN OF DIVINE RENEWAL

Throughout salvation history, water has frequently been portrayed as an instrument of divine renewal: The earth is formed by God's breath sweeping over the waters that cover it. A massive flood bears the fruit of an everlasting covenant between God and every living creature. At God's command, the Red Sea parts to lead the chosen people to pass from slavery to freedom. Jesus is baptized in the Jordan river, calling all who would be baptized to share in his transforming mission.

Water, the primary symbol of baptism, was central to ancient Christian homilies explaining the meaning of the sacrament. The fourth-century bishop and theologian Theodore of Mopsuestia preached the following to catechumens anticipating their baptism at Easter:

So the water you enter is like a crucible in which you are reshaped to a higher nature. . . . This is what a potter does when a vase he is shaping from clay becomes spoilt: he shapes it again in water and so it recovers its true form.

(Edward Yarnold, SJ, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the RCIA*)

Today, all who are baptized continue to be molded and fashioned by baptism's saving waters. This transformation doesn't end when the sacramental celebration is over; baptism is only the beginning of a life that calls one to ongoing conversion and transformation.

## BAPTISMAL REMINDERS

Especially during the Easter season, the Church's rituals remind us of our baptism.



Use of water during the Easter season points to our sharing in Christ's death and resurrection at baptism.

- The rite of sprinkling is especially appropriate during the Sundays of Easter to manifest the season of resurrection, rebirth, and renewal.
- The water blessed at the Easter Vigil is (if possible) kept and used throughout Easter Time to signify more clearly the relationship between Christ's death and resurrection and the sacrament of baptism.
- It is recommended that baptism be celebrated on Sunday, the day the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection. Witnessing a baptism during a Sunday Eucharistic liturgy, where we commemorate Christ's dying and rising, further acknowledges the paschal focus of baptism and the child's incorporation into that reality.
- Attending the baptism of an infant or a child can renew our baptism. Witnessing the child's innocence, dependence, and vulnerability helps us recall the meaning of baptism—a lifelong surrender to the will of God.

## HONORING YOUR BAPTISM

Take time to reflect on or to do the following:

- When were you baptized? Where were you baptized?
- Put the date of your baptism on the calendar, and celebrate that day each year.
- Draw a timeline of your relationship with God from the day of your baptism and highlight the events in your life that marked closeness in that relationship.
- How are you being called at this moment to live out the promises made at your baptism?
- Highlight the events in your life that marked a closeness in that relationship.
- How are you being called at this moment to live out the promises made at your baptism?
- Baptism?

Text by Kathy Kuczka, author of *Connecting the Liturgy with Our Lives: Print and Digital Resources for Faith Formation* (LTP, 2019).  
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