

Let us pray,

Lord, remind us that we have a part to play in this salvific work of yours. Guide us towards cooperation.

Amen.

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Today we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord.

And not only our Lord's Baptism, but our own Baptisms.

Or, today might be the day that if we are not Baptized, maybe we are feeling called to do so?

But what is the big deal about sprinkling some water on someone?

Well, its the Word of God making the ordinary, extraordinary.

It is God taking what is around us, and making it a means of salvation and Grace.

Baptism isn't just a ritual, it is a transformation of the very foundation of who we are.

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Martin Luther says that Baptism covers the old self, for the creation of a new self.

God in our Baptism has created something new.

Created within us, the ability to live the way we always were created to live.

However, Martin Luther recognizes that the “old self” can still peak through sometimes.

Those times that we hurt others, put ourselves above others, when we refuse to share and be gracious.

When we hold back forgiveness and grace.

When we choose our own way rather than God’s way.

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But with our Baptism, those acts no longer define us.

We were given the ability and call to live differently.

To live a life that follows in the ways of the Lord.

One with unconditional love, forgiveness, generosity, grace and mercy.

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God has taken something so ordinary, so mundane, such as water, and used it as a vehicle to proclaim the salvation of the world and to glorify God.

We are called to use this reality, to remind ourselves, that no matter how ordinary we may think we are.

Or how insignificant we may think our lives to be.

Or how unforgivable we may think our actions to be.

We must remember that Jesus has turned ordinary water into an extraordinary sacrament of salvation from sin.

And if God can create such an ordinary element such as water into something extraordinary, than there are no bounds on God's ability to transform us.

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Jesus has called all of us to use our bodies, our voices, our presence to be proclaimers of God's ability to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Reminding the world and all of those in it that they are loved, children of God and that no one is outside the love and Grace of God.

We are called to work with God in turning the ordinary into the extraordinary by; Fighting for peace, justice, love, compassion, and all things that build up the Kingdom of God, rather than tear it down.

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Jesus being baptized alongside many others in the Jordan, proclaimed that God walks among the ordinary.

That God walks with people and amongst people, not ahead of them or above them.

God is a God who has chosen to be and stand with us, for the sake of us.

The Sacraments of Water, Wine and Bread are reminders of this reality, and transform our souls, and give us the ability to be co-creators of the bringing of heaven on earth.

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The Sacraments are a reminder to us all that the God of all creation, is not one that is dictating from the clouds.

But walking alongside his own people, showing up in the darkness, and holding us as we walk through this life.

Jesus' Baptism, and our Baptisms remind us that we are not alone.

That when we stand up for those who are in need, that we do not do it on our own.

But rather, we are standing on the shoulders of Christ.

Jesus' Baptism reminds us that we have nothing to be afraid of.

That if God can bring God's glory through plain water, wine and bread.

God can surely bring glory to our "yes" to God's call to serve, proclaim and follow him.

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The Sacraments are also a reminder, that when we fail at saying yes to God, God still loved us as the old creature.

Jesus died for us, even though we were sinners.

God's love for us is not determined by our saint hood, it is determined by God's love for God's own creation.

**The new creation that we were given in baptism, isn't so that God can love us.**

**Its so that we can learn to love God.**

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Too often we think that God has issues learning how to love us.

Maybe because we think we did too many horrible things.

Maybe we think what we did was too unforgivable.

But the thing is, God has no problem loving us.

We are loved so deeply, no matter what we have done.

No the issue is, we have a hard time loving God, ourselves, and each other.

We are the ones who have difficulty loving, not God.

God doesn't have a loving problem, we do.

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That's why these sacraments of Water, wine and bread are so important.

They remind us that we are loved, no matter what.

**And our call isn't to live a life of many good deeds so that God will love us.**

**No, our call is to live a life of many good deeds, because we have learned to love God.**

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This life of ours, its a gift.

A gift that has its positives and its negatives.

A chance to learn how to love and live the way God does.

It is our Baptismal call, to allow our new creation, to give us the strength, to see the world through God's eyes, and not our own.

To look beyond this brain of ours, and into the eye of God.

To see that we are all more connected than we realize.

The Sacraments give us the opportunity to see that the creation of divisions and hatred, and superiority amongst us, goes against the divine will.

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Jesus' Baptism, amongst the masses, reminds us that we are not designed to have some people as more worthy of life and goodness, than others.

But rather, we are all worthy of God's life, love and grace.

Not because we did anything special, but because the God who created us, said so.

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Remember you are loved,

remember that God cherishes your soul,

remember that nothing is outside of God's grace.

And may we use these truths, as a way and a means, to learn how to truly love God, and the things that God has made.

Amen.