



THE WATERS OF OUR BAPTISM

LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Matthew's Gospel ends with the great commission: "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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Mt. 28:19-20)

Baptism is the central part of our lives as Christians. The liturgy of baptism is rich in meaning, using the symbols of water, oil, a new garment, and a lighted candle. Most of us do not recall our baptisms except from the pictures our family showed to us.

Using the imagery of the blue cloth waving in the sanctuary today at Mass and the words of the song "Living Waters of Hope" that was introduced this weekend, let us reflect on the meaning this sacrament has for each of us. Baptism embraces the Paschal mystery—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as we are immersed in the waters, we are re-born to new life, receiving the new garment signifying new life in Christ. The sacrament also involves conversion, pardoning and cleansing. It takes away the sin of Adam and Eve (original sin). The link between baptism and original sin is that the newly baptized, or in the case of an infant, the parents, have chosen discipleship in Christ and initiation into a community that fosters the values of discipleship and renounces sinfulness. Most importantly, baptism offers the grace to overcome sin. This great sacrament also shares the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Just think about the words of baptism when we become temples of the Holy Spirit. Through sanctifying grace, we are able to live by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through the gifts that the Spirit shares with us. The Church speaks of the seal of baptism imparting an indelible spiritual mark that shows we belong to Christ. It is the reason the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders are received only once. Lastly, baptism joins us to the Body of Christ, the Christian community sharing in the Church's mission to spread the good news of Jesus. We are sacramentally bonded and united to all those who have been baptized. What can we do as *Pilgrims of Hope* this week to truly live out our baptisms?

Have a safe, healthy, and blessed week ahead!