

Living as Baptized Children of God

Baptism of the Lord

Daily Devotional for January 13th: The Mystery of God's Presence

Reading: Matthew 3:13-17

When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened and God's voice declared, "This is my beloved Son." In this moment, we witness what the sermon calls a "holy mystery"—the divine intersecting with the human in ways we cannot fully comprehend. We may not understand exactly how God works in baptism, but we can trust in God's presence. Like the dove descending on Jesus, God's Spirit descends on us. Today, resist the urge to explain away the mystery. Instead, embrace the wonder that the Creator of the universe claims you as beloved. Let this truth settle deep in your soul: you are God's child, marked by divine love.

Reflection Question: How does accepting baptism as a "holy mystery" change your relationship with God?

Daily Devotional for January 14th: Righteousness in Action

Reading: Micah 6:6-8

Jesus told John they must fulfill "all righteousness" through baptism. But what does righteousness look like in daily life? The prophet Micah reminds us that God cares less about religious rituals and more about how we treat others. God desires justice, mercy, and humble walking with Him. Your baptism wasn't just a one-time event—it's a daily calling to live righteously. This means advocating for the widow, welcoming the immigrant, and showing mercy to those who differ from you. The water of baptism washes us not just for personal salvation, but to send us out as agents of God's justice and love in a broken world.

Reflection Question: What does "doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly" look like in your neighborhood today?

Daily Devotional for January 15th: Identity Above All Else

Reading: Galatians 3:26-29

Paul declares that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female—we are all one. Your baptism establishes your primary identity: child of God. This identity supersedes your nationality, political affiliation, denomination, or any other label the world assigns you. The sermon challenges us to ask: Do we live as children of God first? When we encounter someone who votes differently, worships differently, or looks differently, do we see them as our brother or sister? Our baptismal identity calls us to radical unity. Before you are American, Republican, Democrat, Methodist, or anything else, you are God's beloved child—and so is everyone else who calls on God's name.

Reflection Question: What identity do you lead with when meeting someone new? How can you prioritize your identity as God's child?

Daily Devotional for January 16th: They Will Know Us by Our Love

Reading: 1 John 4:7-12

"They will know we are Christians by our love." These words echo throughout Christian history, yet how often do Christians become known instead for judgment, division, and exclusion? John reminds us that love comes from God, and everyone who loves is born of God. The sermon confronts us with uncomfortable truths: Christians have killed other Christians over theological differences. Today, we still excommunicate, demonize, and dehumanize those who think differently. But our baptism calls us to something greater. To love, period. Not love with conditions. Not love for those who agree with us. But love that reflects the God who first loved us—unconditionally, sacrificially, eternally.

Reflection Question: Who challenges your capacity to love? How can you extend God's love to them today?

Daily Devotional for January 17th: Carrying the Spirit into the World

Reading: Acts 1:4-8

The image of a baptismal dove superimposed on a Sun City neighborhood reminds us that we carry God's Spirit everywhere we go. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples, empowering them to be witnesses. Your baptism wasn't just about what happened at the font—it's about what happens in the grocery line, on the golf course, in your neighborhood. Every step you take, you carry God's presence. Are you living in a way that shows others you're a baptized child of God? The Spirit who descended on Jesus at his baptism now dwells in you, equipping you to love, serve, forgive, and witness wherever you are. Your ordinary moments become sacred opportunities to reveal God's extraordinary love.

Reflection Question: As you go about your daily routine today, how can you be more aware of God's Spirit working through you?

Closing Prayer for the Week: *Gracious God, thank you for claiming us as your children in baptism. Help us to live out our baptismal identity every day, loving others as you have loved us. May your Spirit guide us to see every person as our brother or sister, and empower us to bring your justice, mercy, and peace into the world. In Jesus' name, Amen.*