

**Congregation at Prayer**  
**✠ Festival of St. Titus ✠**

*A Guide for Daily Family Prayer*  
*For the Week of January 27<sup>th</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>*

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

When you're making coffee, it's best to have the purest water you can find—the taste of the coffee is just that much better. The water matters with coffee. But when it comes to Baptism, the water just needs to be water. It's not so important that it be hot or cold (though, you don't want to scald the person being baptized; or freeze him either!). It doesn't matter whether you use a lot or a little, whether it's tap water, bottled water, or water from the lake. What matters is that there's water, *included in God's command and combined with God's Word*. And our Lord takes into His use any sort of water He sees fit.

This is an issue for some. For some, it matters a great deal that the water be *special*—from the Jordan, or holy water. For some it matters a how much you use, even to the point of saying that if you aren't fully immersed in the water then you aren't actually baptized. But, thanks be to God, the Lord takes into His use all waters. As Luther's famous flood prayer emphasizes,

*“Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood, and a lavish washing away of sin.”*

“All waters,” Luther says. And in his Catechism he emphasizes that point in particular, “*Certainly not just plain water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things.*” It's not something in the waters that does the cleansing and healing and forgiving—it's in the word, that the waters are joined to and combined with. It's the word of God that makes us righteous and holy before God—and those words come to us in the waters of Baptism.

St. Peter reminds us that there were similar sorts of waters at the time of the flood. These waters were destructive waters—leaving in their wake the graves of many sinners. And yet, in these same waters floated Noah and his family, eight souls in all. These waters, St. Peter said, *symbolize* Baptism, “*which now saves you.*”

Did you catch that? It's not the waters of Baptism that are symbolic of the flood; it's the waters of the flood that are symbolic of Baptism. What happens in Baptism is no symbol or representation—it's the real deal. In Baptism, you are saved.

St. Paul says the same thing in his letter to Titus,  
*“He saved us through the washing of rebirth..”* (Titus 3:5a)

In Baptism, it's all God's work, for you, for life and salvation: certainly, not just plain water!

**What's with the Water?**

Responsive Prayer 2, *Lutheran Service Book* p.285

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

**1 Peter 3:21**

*“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

**Baptism**

**How can water do such great things?**

Certainly not just water, but the word of God in and with the water does these things, along with the faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without God's word the water is plain water and no Baptism. But with the word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of the new birth in the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul says in Titus, chapter three:

*“He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.”*

Titus 3:5-8

Daily Readings...

*Monday (1/27):* Zechariah 4:1-5:11; Romans 15:14-33

*Tuesday (1/28):* Zechariah 6:1-7:14; Romans 16:17-27

*Wednesday (1/29):* Zechariah 8:1-23; 2 Timothy 1:1-26

*Thursday (1/30):* Zechariah 9:1-17; 2 Timothy 2:1-26

*Friday (1/31):* Zechariah 10:1-11:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-17

*Saturday (2/1):* Zechariah 11:4-17; 2 Timothy 4:1-18

*Sunday (2/2):* Zechariah 12:1-13:9; Titus 1:1-2:6

Prayer of the Week...

Almighty God, You called Titus to the work of pastor and teacher. Make all shepherds of Your flock diligent in preaching Your holy Word so that the whole world may know the immeasurable riches of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm of the Week...

**Psalm 71**

Hymn of the Week... “*Preach You the Word*”

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Looking Forward to Next Week...

*The Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Our Lord ~*

1 Samuel 1:21-28 Hebrews 2:14-18 Luke 2:22-40