

Congregation at Prayer
✠ Feast of the Purification of Mary
and the Presentation of Our Lord ✠

A Guide for Daily Family Prayer
For the Week of February 3rd to 9th

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

As a Christian, it's never just "me and Jesus." In fact, it's not even me AND Jesus—but, me IN Jesus. Let me explain.

We live in a culture and a time that is very *individualistic*. That is, we think of ourselves first and foremost. Every decision and action is a calculation of what is best *for me*. And even when we're dealing with others, we're constantly trying to figure out how to treat them well *so that it goes well for me*. We're surrounded by commodities. We have more options than we know what to do with. So every trip to the grocery store is another realm of decision: what is best *for me*. We use things for our advantage—and people aren't excepted. And neither is God.

We tend to even view religion in the sort of way that best serves me. We approach worship wondering, *what's in it for me?* Jesus becomes someone else we can use. Our idea of religion—even Christianity, then—is me AND Jesus.

But that's not the way the Scriptures speak. They never let you stand on one side, and Jesus on the other, and working together accomplish anything. In fact, to have any sort of separation is to be *outside* of Jesus—that's the place where there's *weeping and gnashing of teeth*. You don't want to be *outside* of Jesus, or *apart* from Him. Rather, in Baptism, the Scriptures speak of the Christian *in Christ*. St. Paul says,

"For as many of you as were baptized INTO Christ have put on Christ."

This one-flesh union, where we are baptized into His body (the Church!), is the language of marriage—which, again, isn't the language of one person relative to another. The two become one flesh. Husband and wife unite in such intimacy that the whole person joins the other: body, soul, mind, and strength. That's the sort of love that is directed also to God. Remember?

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

(Mark 12:30)

In Baptism, the love that is shared between God and man—you and your savior, Jesus—is the sort of love that all marriages aspire to share in as well! Baptism is that intimate union between you and God, where whatever goes for Jesus now goes for you. Why? It's precisely because you are now *IN CHRIST!* You've *put on Christ*. You *wear* Him—and He *bears* you. And since He is the heir of all things, in heaven and on earth, so are you *in Him*.

Baptized INTO Christ

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

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

Galatians 3:27

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on 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 (2/3): Zechariah 14:1-21; Titus 2:7-3:15

Tuesday (2/4): Job 1:1-22; John 1:1-18

Wednesday (2/5): Job 2:1-3:10; John 1:19-34

Thursday (2/6): Job 3:11-26; John 1:35-51

Friday (2/7): Job 4:1-21; John 2:1-12

Saturday (2/8): Job 5:1-27; John 2:13-25

Sunday (2/9): Job 6:1-13; John 3:1-21

Prayer of the Week...

Almighty and ever-living God, as Your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh, grant that we may be presented to You with pure and clean hearts; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm of the Week...

Psalm 48

Hymn of the Week... *"Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace"*

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Looking Forward to Next Week...

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany ~

Isaiah 58:3-9a

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Matthew 5:13-20