

Congregation at Prayer
✠ **Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany** ✠

*A Guide for Daily Family Prayer
For the Week of February 10th to 16th*

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

In college I witnessed something I'll never forget: an adult baptism. All I had known or seen before (as far as I can remember) was the baptism of infants. But on this occasion, a friend invited me to see him get baptized...*again*.

What? Baptized, again? Didn't it take the first time? What happened that this poor guy needed to be baptized *again*. Obviously, this took place in a tradition different from our own—I believe it was some non-denominational church. Even then, though I admittedly didn't know much about anything, I knew that something wasn't quite right.

It was explained to me that Baptism is an outward sign of an inward faith. I was told that it was a public declaration of a decision and a newfound way of life. Baptism was the testimony of a re-devoted or newly devoted Christian. This friend of mine had made some serious life decisions about his faith and thought the best expression would be *another* baptism.

I wish I knew Ephesians 4:4 at that point:

“[There is...]one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

There's *one Baptism*—not two, or three, or whenever I fall away and come back again. Why? Because in Baptism, God actually does something. He actually saves. He actually puts His name on us and makes us His own. Baptism is all about God applying the Gospel of salvation in Christ to us.

In Baptism, St. Paul says, we die with Christ. Our sin is drowned. Our evil desires are immersed in the flood that destroyed Pharaoh and his army. And then a new man arises. In Baptism, Christ then dwells in us. He frees our guilty conscience and creates within us a love for God and the neighbor. This is the *new life* we have been baptized for.

But what if you fall away? What if you stop believing? What if your evil desires get the best of you and lead you back into your old life—a life of anger and hatred and sin? Shouldn't you get baptized again? No! There's *one Baptism*! Come back to that one Baptism in which God has already done everything for you. Repent of your sin, believe in the crucified Christ. And rest assured that the new life God has for you is already yours.

When Baptism is ultimately God's work and not ours, then we can be certain that no matter what we feel, or how weak our faith seems to be, or how unproductive our life is—God is the one who made the promise. He is faithful, and in Him we rejoice!

One Baptism

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

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

Ephesians 4:4-6

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

Baptism

What does such baptizing with water indicate?

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans, chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Rom 6:4)

Daily Readings...

Monday (2/10): Job 6:14-30; John 3:22-4:6

Tuesday (2/11): Job 7:1-21; John 4:7-26

Wednesday (2/12): Job 8:1-22; John 4:27-45

Thursday (2/13): Job 9:1-35; John 4:46-54

Friday (2/14): Job 10:1-22; John 5:1-18

Saturday (2/15): Job 11:1-20; John 5:19-29

Sunday (2/16): Job 12:1-6, 12-25; John 5:30-47

Prayer of the Week...

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalms of the Week...

Psalms 112:1-9

Hymn of the Week... “*The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace*” 580

Looking Forward to Next Week...

Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany ~

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37