

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

The Christian life begins with Baptism.

It begins when a Samaritan woman sits at the well with Jesus and says,
“Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty” (Jn 4:15)

It begins when Jesus sits at the well with you and says,
“Whoever drinks of the water that *I* give him will never be thirsty *forever*” (4:14).

The Christian life begins with Baptism – and has *no end*.

No end.

“It doesn’t make any sense to say ‘no end,’” you might say, “We’re *looking* at the end!”
Ah, yes—but your eyes deceive you!

What looked like mere water some 63 years ago at Von’s baptism was no mere water.
As Von sat at the well as a married woman, about my age,
it wasn’t mere water she received, but the water that Jesus gave.
It was life-giving, resurrecting,
sin-removing, death-defying,
grace-bestowing water.

No mere water indeed!

This water began Von’s life, even though she’d already spent 27 years walking about.
It began the life she lives even though she died.
And even though she died her life has no end—
baptism has no end.

Just as the Samaritan woman in today’s Gospel reading knew nothing other than that she
thirsted and Jesus promised an end to thirst,
there is no more thirst for Von.
Jesus promised, she believed, and now she sees.

As Von gave sight to thousands upon thousands by her work with Braille;
so also has Jesus now given her sight—
sight without any hindrance of sin, guilt, pain, or old-age.

Von knew the gift of God as He gave it to her through the sprinkling of water upon her
forehead.

But now, now she knows the gift of God as He stands with her *face to face*.
Before she knew it by faith alone—
now she knows it by sight and by touch and by smell.

Von was just another Samaritan whom Jesus invited to drink His water.

She thought that wouldn't be such a bad idea, so as she entered the water with all her sin Christ walked her out.

He kept her sins and death; she kept His forgiveness and life—
a life, which has no end!

As the two of them walked side by side through this painful and lonely world His life was hers, her death was His. His gifts were hers, her troubles, burdens, and pains were His.

I told Laura the other day that this funeral wouldn't be about Von, but about Jesus.

But what I really meant to say was, now that the two are together, you can't have one without the other.

Von died and we see that. But Christ died, too, and we see that also!

“Do you not know,” St. Paul says, “that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

It's this newness of life that Von now walks around in!

Her baptism united her with Christ in such a way that she now is with Him for eternity.

And with Jesus come all the saints having gone before,
Arnie and Mark included.

The Christian life begins with baptism because it begins with Christ.

And Christ is yours in baptism just as He is Von's now!

When Christ is yours He never leaves you alone.

He puts His name on you in Baptism saying, “This one's mine!”

He *always* seeks the well at which He might find you and speaks to you His words of life-giving water.

He tells you that you needn't thirst any longer; for in Him you are satisfied.

If you've already met at the well then He meets you in His Church.

He meets you while you bend your knees.

He meets you while you fold your hands.

He meets you where your sins are confessed.

He meets you where His word crawls into your ear and makes a home.

He meets you as you open your mouth and receive His body and blood.

He meets you as often as you're willing—

to bring you to where He's now brought Von, to meet Him face-to-face.

It's when we're face-to-face with Christ that we finally see clearly.

No more hindrances,
no more doubts,
no more fears, frustrations, or anxieties.
No more loneliness,
no more pride,
no more brokenness, blindness, or sin.
NO MORE CROSSES.

For *this* Von is blessed. She sees clearly.

She lives and drinks from Christ's well forever.

She is baptized and her baptism has no end.

And neither does *yours!*

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