

It is truly a wonderful blessing to celebrate baptisms on the morning we and the whole church celebrate Christ's Baptism. In just a few minutes mommy Michelle and then beautiful Myles will join the throng of saints as baptized members of Christ's family. Accompanying this exciting event in our lives is the retelling of this passage of Jesus' life, when he chooses to undergo the baptism that John the Baptist had been promoting down at the Jordan river. Fully accepting his place as human, Jesus lets his sinless body and being be plunged below the water's surface, and in response the heavens open with the voice of God echoing the joy of creation. "With you I am well pleased", we hear.

Water is the central image not only of the Jesus' baptism and today's baptism here, but also in the first lines of the first book of the Bible that we also heard today. Genesis' first lines tell us about the primordial water from which all creation is brought forth. Upon those empty waters God brings everything into being, from the tiniest phytoplankton to the mightiest blue whale to the prettiest flower to the shining star far away. Creation is an essential good thing even, since without it we and everything else would not exist. The water would remain empty. But God choose to fill the emptiness with everything, and that is good.

And yet upon Creation's goodness we can easily lift up examples of the not so good. We examine our own lives and in our times of weakness we get possessed by the emotional toll of our mistakes, bemoaning how we have not measured up. If you are one of those who does not experience these moments of self-doubt and self-loathing, consider yourself lucky. Taking the deep breath and moving on with courage into life is a hallmark of heroes, and each of us in our own way puts the cape and mask on as we face our days.

Along with our own pains we examine around us the tragedy and dismay that infects our world. From selfishness and abandon to pure evil we are beset by plenty of examples of that which is not good. As we turn the page on a new year and move forward to embrace to hope of another year, we do it more often than not hoping that the last year's pains do not repeat. Thus the trembling old man of 2011 gives way to the hope-filled baby of 2012. No wonder our hearts are lifted and brightened when God blesses our presence with a young child. The child represents hope.

Yes, our contribution to creation could easily be judged to be anything but good. But God's answer to our personal pains and in fact to the groaning of the world under the weight of human sin is to bring us back to the water. The primal sea of nothing that is filled by the love of God and becomes creation is once again made front and center, and clean flowing water is offered as a salve to our hurt lives. God again blesses the water, and our celebration today recalls how God chooses to bless the water with his very presence as a sign that his love is able to take our brokenness and restore it to good.

So much do we want this healing that it is traditional that we bring even our youngest new life to the water, so that all that we have been given by God can be blessed by His

work of creation and restoration. We baptize one another so that we can, as a community of God, share in the restoration of all creation through the power of God made manifest in Jesus Christ our Lord. If creation is, in essence, good, then this water of life is a tangible token of goodness that God gives to us. What joy to bring the children of God, the young and the mature, through the water and into new life in God's restored world.

So let's have a baptism!