

Let Us Pray

Lord,
I begin this process seeking an open heart
and an open mind.
Please help me shed my personal ambitions
for the sake of finding a new experience with you.
Please enable me to set aside everything I think I
know for an open mind and a new experience.
Remove any denial that may get in the way
of seeing my condition exactly as it is.
Help me to see the truth about addiction
and the areas of my life that shut out
the sunlight of the Spirit.
Offer me the opportunity to see the true meaning of
powerlessness over people, places, and things. Just as
your own baptism identified you with the broken and
made you one with sinners,
I look to the waters of Baptism
to acknowledge my broken ways
and clothe myself in your redeeming grace.
Thank you for providing me this path
to co-creating my life with you, my blessed Lord.
Amen.

Reflection Questions

- What fears do you have about plunging yourself into the grace that Baptism brings?
- What types of confusion, chaos, and/or doubt are present in your life that seem to stand in your way?

Nativity of Saint John the Baptist



This coming weekend the Church celebrates the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, an important and mysterious figure in the New Testament. We honor his birth, appreciating him as the first to recognize Jesus while they were both still in the womb. He would go on to serve as the forerunner of the Messiah, calling people to be baptized as a sign of their repentance.

We enter recovery with the recognition that something in our life has to change. We are tired of the consequences—even to the point of admitting that the only person whom we can change is ourselves. At some point, our lives had become unmanageable and only God can restore us (and our loved ones) to where He may have us be. Coming to this conclusion is an important part of repentance and clearing a way for the Lord to enter our lives.

The Gospel of Luke describes John the Baptist's ministry (Luke 3:3-6):

He went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*“A voice of one crying out in the desert:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.
Every valley shall be filled
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.
The winding roads shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”*

Prior to Jesus's active ministry, John the Baptist helped convert the hardened hearts of tax collectors, soldiers, and others compelled to turn away from old habits. When asked how to live out their baptism, John responded, “Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance” (Luke 3:7).

Working through the first few steps of recovery establishes a foundation upon which we prepare the way of the Lord. We make straight his paths by seeking his will and letting go of control. We fill in the valleys of deceit and dishonesty with transparency and truth. The mountains of ego and fear are flattened by humility and faith. Our fellowship guides us along a straight path that is smoothed by the footsteps of those traveling ahead of us.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church introduces the Sacrament of Baptism by mentioning:

‘Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

This sacrament is called Baptism, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek baptizein) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature."

We can lean into the grace of our own baptism by immersing ourselves into the way of Christ. How are you being called to prepare a way for the Lord? The birth and life of John the Baptist offers hope and guidance that we may experience the Good News that is offered to us, one day at a time.