

“Come On In the Water Is Fine”
January 11, 2009

Video clip

The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. —John 37, Holy Bible

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside still waters..." — Psalm 23:1-2 Holy Bible NRSV*

I remember my own baptism...
I remember helping my father baptize in a river...
Do you remember your baptism? Or stories about it?

Why did Jesus get baptized?

Last week we talked about the divine symbolism of light. Today we can take a similar look at water:

- Necessary for life
- Cleanliness
- OT—chaos controlled by God's grace
- NT—death, conquered by Christ
- Water like gold in the west
- Purification
- Holy wells
- Sacred springs
- Wishing wells
- In other folklore, it's necessary to cross a river to enter the other world or the Underworld.
- Water is also associated with great power. For example, King Arthur received his sword from the Lady of the Lake.
- Other tales describe faerie worlds beneath the sea or underneath lakes. Near Limerick, Ireland, the fabled third Earl of Desmond, Gerald Iarla FitzGerald, lives in his castle beneath Lough Gur. Every seven years, he rises from the lough with his white horse, and circles the water's edge before returning to his underwater home.
- Some of the most passionate and powerful gods of mythological history include Poseidon and others related to the sea.
- In the Bible, we read about the Great Flood, Noah's Ark, the parting of the Red Sea.
- Many churches and some homes use holy water for blessings and spiritual protection.
- We like to take walks on the beach, by a lake, or along a trail that follows a stream. At the very least, it is a calming and beautiful place for meditation.

“Water, in some Earth-based belief systems is also the element which represents emotion, visions and dreams. A Japanese researcher named Dr. Masaru Emoto, has taken many photographs of frozen water crystals which are subjected to different words and thoughts. Water from clear springs and water that has had loving words directed toward it form brilliant, complex and colorful snowflake like patterns. Polluted water or water which has been exposed to negative thoughts forms incomplete, misshapen patterns with dull colors. This research is a spotlight on how our thoughts, our attitudes and our emotions can have an impact on our environment.” - *Linda J. Paul*

*Water flows humbly to the lowest level.
Nothing is weaker than water,
yet for overcoming what is hard and strong,
nothing surpasses it.— Lao Tzu*

Water: Nature's mirror for that which lies within us.

Human beings are made up mostly of water, in roughly the same percentage as water is to the surface of the earth. Our tissues and membranes, our brains and hearts, our sweat and tears--all reflect the same recipe for life, in which efficient use is made of those ingredients available on the surface of the earth. We are 23 percent carbon, 2.6 percent nitrogen, 1.4 percent calcium, 1.1 percent phosphorous, with tiny amounts of roughly three dozen other elements. But above all we are oxygen (61 percent) and hydrogen (10 percent), fused together in the unique molecular combination known as water, which makes up 71 percent of the human body.

*So when environmentalists assert that we are, after all, part of the earth, it is no mere rhetorical flourish. Our blood even contains roughly the same percentage of salt as the ocean, where the first life forms evolved. They eventually brought onto the land a self-contained store of the sea water to which we are still connected chemically and biologically. Little wonder, then, that water carries such great spiritual significance in most religions, from the water of Christian baptism to Hinduism's sacred water of life. - *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit, Al Gore**

You perhaps at one time or another have seen on TV the old black and white video footage of the civil rights marches in the sixties. Martin Luther King often at the front received his share of stinging high-pressured water hoses. Rev. King once remarked that he and the other marchers had a common strength. He put it this way, “as we went before the fire hoses; we had known water. If we were a Baptist or some other denomination, we had been immersed. If we were Methodist, and some others, we had been sprinkled, but we knew water.”

Some of you may remember an episode from the old Andy Griffith Television show in which the Women's Historical Society discovered that a living descendant of a Revolutionary War hero was living right there in Mayberry. The news generated excitement and curiosity throughout the town as people made plans for recognizing the hero's relative. Barney Fife, of course, twisted his own family tree to the point that he put

himself in line for the honor. The rest of the townspeople felt special just because someone among them was related to a hero.

However, everyone was shocked when the person was finally revealed. A careful analysis of the genealogical records determined that the hero's descendent was none other than, Otis Campbell, the town drunk. Despite suggestions to find a "substitute Otis" for the presentation, the real Otis showed up for the ceremony true to form. When the ladies finally give him the plaque, Otis holds it in his hands for a moment, and then decides instead to give the plaque to the town. He tells them, "Just because you're the descendent of a hero doesn't make you one too. So I would like to present this plaque to the town of Mayberry, to which I am just proud to belong."

Well, aren't we all? Aren't we all just happy to belong, to be included! That's what happens to us together in baptism, we all are included with Christ and with one another. It's the gift of relationship, of belonging, of recognizing we are all in this together - together with Jesus and with one another. (Clayton A. Cobb, *Something We Do Together*)

May the Great Spirit watch over you as long as the rivers shall run and the grass shall grow. — Native American Blessing

REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM AND BE THANKFUL!