

# Scripture Reflections on Baptism

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## Reflection One

### Scripture Reading

“Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.’” (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

### Reflection

It is quite amazing to imagine God “knowing us” so well, even before we were born! What does it mean to know another, to be known by God? Is it to be loved beyond comprehension? Is it to be understood before one even understands one self? Is it to be valued as gifted and capable by another? Is it to be accepted as one who is loved to be the best one can be?

To be known by another implies trust, vulnerability, mutual sharing, and unconditional love.

### Prayer

Loving God, bless this household with love that knows and still loves, and with challenging hearts to call one another to be the best that you know we can be. Walk with us as we deepen our understanding of how Baptism celebrates our call to be prophet—to proclaim the unconditional power of your love through word and action. Amen.

## Reflection Two

### Scripture Reading

“Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother’s womb he named me...And he said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified... I will give you as light to the nations, that my salvation reach to the end of the earth.’” (Isaiah 49:1,3,6)

### Reflection

A favorite activity of many young children is to turn the lights off in the house and to bravely explore the darkness through the use of flashlights. They will often play with the light, marveling at how it guides them through the house and lights up even the darkest corners of the room. Fear often surfaces when the flash light power fades and the darkness seems greater than the light. Greater fear surfaces when the flashlight fails altogether and they find themselves entirely in the dark until an adult turns the lights back on for them.

Through baptism we are God’s gifts of light to the world. We are called to gift the world in which we live with the faithful light of Christ and to light up even the darkest corners of our world so that no person need walk in fear.

## **Prayer**

Creator God, source of all light, help us to be a constant flame of your hope-filled light. Bless us with courage to shine your light in all places, even those that scare us. We ask this in the name of Jesus your Son, your gift of light to the world. Amen.

## Reflection Three

### **Scripture Reading**

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me: he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

### **Reflection**

We often do not need to look far to find the oppressed, the broken hearted, the captive. We ourselves often feel oppressed, or find ourselves grieving, or trapped by others’ expectations or selfish wants. Do we dare to see the pain and oppression of the people around us? Do we dare to minister to them or to allow them to minister to us in our time of need?

Baptism marks us as people of the resurrection, people who hope and trust in life beyond pain and death, as people who celebrate the Lord’s year of favor.

### **Prayer**

God our liberator, help us to see beyond our pain to walk as people of hope. Bless us with vision to see the captivity of the people around us, with courage to reach out to those in need, and with compassionate love to journey faithfully with others.

Jesus our liberator, send your spirit upon us to enable us to embrace our baptismal call to serve as you served. Amen.

## Reflection Four

### **Scripture Reading**

“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)

### **Reflection**

A contemporary Catholic hymn sings that “Gifts that are freely given, must freely be received.” One could further add that gifts freely given are to freely be used in service of building up the body of Christ. What gifts do you freely offer to build up the body of Christ? What gifts do you use not only in the church but in the world in which you live? How do you build up the body of Christ through your daily work activities? Have you ever thought of yourself as equipping others for building up the body of Christ, using your gifts to invite others to use their gifts to build up the body?

### **Prayer**

Life giving God, you call us through baptism to use our gifts to offer life to the world. Keep challenging us to challenge others to share their gifts in service of creating your kingdom in today’s world. We offer you this prayer in unity with all the body of Christ. Amen.

## Reflection Five

### **Scripture Reading**

“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” (1 Peter 4:10)

### **Reflection**

This is the challenge that Jesus offers to those who would follow him: become partners in God’s work on earth. For each of us, that involves taking responsibility to see that God’s work gets done. Through baptism, we are called to be stewards of God’s grace, called to actively participate in God’s work of loving, reconciling, healing, celebrating, and nurturing.

## Prayer

Creator God, from the moment you breathed life in to the world you invited humanity to join in your project of redemption and salvation. Bless us with wisdom to be good stewards for you, willing to sacrifice time, gifts, and finances to be your partners. Amen.

## Reflection Six

### Scripture Reading

“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.” (2 Cor.9:8)

### Reflection

Unfortunately we often think of God’s blessing in terms of material possessions and material security, and therefore few of us would say that we have “enough” to share abundantly with others. I was surprised one day when I asked a student in one of my classes “How are you today?” and instead of the usual “Fine, thank you” response she responded by saying “Blessed, thank you!”

It caused me to pause as I continued with my day as I pondered if I too was blessed. By the end of the day I had listed over a 100 different blessings that God had given me and most were not material in nature— friends, health, ability to teach, etc. I also discovered that a heart grateful for the abundant blessings of God is indeed a heart more open to sharing the abundance of God’s love and grace with others.

### Prayer

Gracious God, source of all blessing and goodness, your abundant love continues to surprise and strengthen us. Bless us with grateful hearts, a heart that constantly celebrates the gift of being your blessed child through the celebration of baptism. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your blessed Son. Amen.

## Reflection Seven

## Scripture Reading

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

### Reflection

Sometimes it seems so hard to live out our baptismal commitments. And not only are we called to live out our own baptismal commitments we are called to help others live out theirs as well. What a relief it is to hear Jesus say, “I am with you always.” We need not do this on our own! We have the guarantee of at least one companion with us: Jesus.

### Prayer

All knowing God, you grace us with the gift of your Son to walk with us as we invite others to embrace the challenge of being your disciples. Send your Spirit of courage and perseverance upon us so that we may be faithful disciples, witnessing to others through word and deed. We ask this prayer in the name of your risen Son Jesus. Amen.

