

NOVEMBER 26, 2023: CHRIST THE KING



Last week we learned that baptism can act as a GPS for our lives. The directions we took helped us recognize where we started from *before* our baptism. Our nature and soul were wounded by the Fall and harmed our relationship with God, others, creation, and self. God chose to fix this break in our relationship with Him through the sacrament of Baptism. We explored this first healing as we traveled down Cross Drive to Paraclete Lane to Abba Road. The heart of this healing is the Paschal Mystery (Jesus' passion/death, resurrection and ascension). Once we become healed in our relationship with God, we are prepared to continue on our journey.

We now make a turn to travel down Church Street. And the next relationship healed through baptism is that with others. As baptism unites us to Christ, it also unites us to all others who have been baptized. We become part of the eschatological, pentecostal community formed in Christ by the Holy Spirit—the Church. It is called eschatological because we realize that we are already living in the end times. We now simply await the consummation of the promises, already realized in Christ, when He comes again. We are not waiting for the victory: the victory has already been won by Christ through his death and resurrection. We simply seek to live out the victory. It is pentecostal because the community was “born” on Pentecost as the Holy Spirit empowered the community gathered in the upper room to go out and continue the mission of Christ. The Church is that community that Christ intends to be his presence—his sacrament in the world through our adoption as sons and daughters of God. A filial connection is made with God through union with Christ, and so we can be his witnesses to the world. Therefore, we are rightly understood as the people of God who have one common purpose—to live a life of holiness and perfection. Through the grace received in the sacraments, we can proclaim Christ to the ends of the earth until the end of time.

We now hit a bit of road work on our journey. God works not only through human beings but through all creation. Christ also redeems our relationship with creation. Our baptism, which uses creation and water, helps us to realize that God can and must be seen through his creation. All that God has created is intended to be seen as a gift of his presence in our lives. God creates and sustains his creation by the power of his love. If God stopped loving anything it would cease to exist. Existence itself is a sign of God's love. In and through baptism we are called to be more aware of God through his creation, and to recognize that creation is not there for us to dominate and use as we please. Rather, we have been called to be stewards of creation. God has a purpose for all that He has created, and our responsibility is to understand that purpose and to use it in accord with God's will. When we do this, it allows creation to be a means of living out our salvation in a fuller way, for we are open to God's plan and live more fully in accord with that plan.

As we make our way through the road work, we make a turn onto U Drive which will lead us to Mission Avenue. Just as we are in relationship with God, others, and the rest of creation, we are also in relationship with ourselves. Baptism at its core removes sin and heals our very soul, making us truly whole. The healing of our soul enables us to experience our true nature which is that of being in union with God. It opens us up to real freedom and the ability to embrace the fullness of our humanity. Christ showed us what it means to be truly human—to live our lives perfectly in accord with the will of God. Our nature is directed to that true desire. Sin is not simply the rejection of God; it is the rejection of our very nature. Baptism therefore calls us to live that life of holiness, which is only possible by our cooperating with Christ empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit; it therefore recreates us into the image of Christ and makes us a new creation. This new creation is centered on salvation and holiness and leads to a life of service. This life of service is defined by the threefold mission of Christ as priest, prophet, and king. In baptism, as we come to share in the one priesthood of Christ, we are marked for a life of worship. This worship is both a sacrificial offering of our lives to the Father and a right and duty to participate in the liturgical life of the Church and grow in personal, devotional prayer. Through baptism all Christians are entered into the royal priesthood of Christ. We serve the prophetic office by proclaiming the gospel with our very lives. Prophecy in the Old Testament was not so much about predicting the future as it was about proclaiming the truth. It was about leading people from a life of sin to one of following the commands of the Lord. As Christians the

truth we proclaim is Christ, as He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Christian prophecy is best done in action. As Saint Francis is reputed to have said, "Preach the Gospel and when necessary use words." And finally, we live out the Kingship of Christ through service. As Jesus said, "I have come *not* to be served but to serve." This life of service also takes seriously the reality of stewardship over creation. We work to ensure that creation is used in the way God intends and, by so doing, we help others to do the same.

We will continue our journey next week.

If you have any questions about anything, please do not hesitate to call/text me at (978) 254-0560.

If you prefer to email, please visit <https://theholyrood.org/email-fr-brian>.

Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,
Fr. Brian

