

THE CONGREGATION AT PRAYER

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

The fourth week of Epiphany

January 29-February 4, 2017

Catechetical Notes for the week: *The first part of Baptism teaches us that the water is not just simple water. It is water connected with God's Word. In and of itself, the water is plain water, unable to save or cleanse from sin. But with the Word, it is a Holy Sacrament, a powerful washing, in which the Trinity is graciously present for us. We are brought into the family of God. God becomes our Father, Christ our Brother, the Spirit our Comforter. The Word of God is eternal, therefore, this Bath is eternal. To cling to Baptism is to cling to the Word for the Word is never separate from Baptism. The second part of Baptism teaches us that Baptism saves us. We are born in the kingdom of the devil, yet Baptism rips us out and brings us into the kingdom of God. It destroys every sin, drowns our flesh, and frees us from death. The baptized will not die, but will live with Christ forever. He is part of God's family, saved by Christ, so he must live with Christ. For him physical death is nothing more than a sleep. So Baptism is the beginning of everything we are, do, and will become. The first and second parts of Baptism show us that we are conceived and born in sin, in the kingdom of the devil, slaves to sin, bound to death. We cannot free ourselves, help ourselves, or deliver ourselves. Birth from mom gives us only death. We desperately need this rebirth by the Spirit. It leads us to repentance and faith in our Triune God who saved us in this sacred Bath, and through it has given us every good and perfect gift.*

Theme: *The Lord of nature saves you.*

In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTLES' CREED

BIBLE VERSE: Acts 2:38-39 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

<i>First: What is Baptism?</i> Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's Word.	2nd Grade+
<i>Which is that Word of God?</i> Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Mt 28:19	Preschool+
<i>Second: What benefits does Baptism give?</i> It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.	2nd Grade+
<i>Which are these words and promises of God?</i> Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Mk 16:16	1st Grade+

DAILY READING		<i>The Story Bible</i> page
Monday	Mt 3:13-17	297
Tuesday	Gn 8:1-22; (7:1-24)	36
Wednesday	Ex 14:14-31 (14:1-13)	110
Thursday	Josh 3:1-17	137
Friday	2 Kg 5:9-19	227
Saturday	Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9	(345) 310

PRAYER

Pray the Catechism: *(The catechetical notes are meant to assist you in this.)*

Example:

Repeat the first and second part of Baptism

A teaching: Dear Father, in Baptism You teach me that I am born dead in sin. Yet You have saved me in this Bath by drowning me and raising me with Christ.

A thanksgiving: I thank You for this most sacred Bath and for saving me through it. By it you bring the cross to me.

A confession: I confess and ask for grace that I forgotten about my Baptism assuming it has no bearing on my life today.

A prayer: I ask You to keep this saving Bath before my eyes each and every day.

Personal prayers: *(suggestions listed below)*

Sunday: *Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; for true and godly worship throughout the world; and for the faithful preaching and hearing of God's Word.*

Monday: *Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for your calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for government; and for peace.*

Tuesday: *Pray for deliverance against temptation; for the addicted and despairing; for the tortured and oppressed; and for those struggling with besetting sins.*

Wednesday: *Pray for marriage and family, that all may live together under the grace of Christ according to the Word of God; for parents who must rear their children alone; and for godly schools, our church schools, and seminaries.*

Thursday: *Pray for the Church and her pastors; for missionaries; and for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood.*

Friday: *Pray for the preaching of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for its spread throughout the whole world, especially in our community; and for the persecuted.*

Saturday: *Pray for faithfulness to the end; for the sick and dying; for the revival of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; and for receptive hearts for worship and study on the Lord's Day.*

Prayer for Epiphany 4

O God, who knows that we are set in the midst of so many and great danger that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright, grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry through all temptations, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord; who lives and reigns with You, and the Holy Spirit: one God, now and forever.

Luther's Morning/Evening Prayer

Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.