



Just Add Water

Read: Luke 3:15-22

One of my favourite summer memories was making iced tea at my friend's house. We would put a huge scoop of crystals in the bottom of a large glass, fill it with water and then madly stir until we had some rather condensed iced tea. It was paradise. One day my friend's sister decided to try. She put the crystals in the glass, poured the water, and then, without stirring it, she drank the whole thing. What was left was a pile of soggy iced tea mix. In a strange way this has always been my image of baptism. Let me explain.

Infant baptism is pretty much the norm in the Church. It's a cute little ceremony where the baby is presented, the water is poured, and the camera's flash. But normally somewhere amidst the excitement someone forgets to stir the water. Unless the grace we receive at baptism is activated, it can't do what it's supposed to do. In the end, all we will be left with is a soggy pile of unused grace.

If baptism is viewed as a rite of passage rather than an entrance into a "personal relationship with the true and living God" (CCC 2558), it loses its true power. In the Gospel, John explains that the baptism we receive in Christ will be with "the Holy Spirit and with fire." Though God's gift of grace is free and unmerited, we still need to be open to letting him stir it up. The only way this will happen is if we make a conscious effort to grow in our faith.

Although baptism is a one-time event, we must consciously choose to live out our baptism daily. This means we must repent, turn away from bad habits, accept Christ and follow him (Luke 9:23). When we accept Christ he sends the Holy Spirit to dwell within us (John 14:16). The Holy Spirit stirs up the waters of our baptism and fills us with "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness" (Galatians 5:22). In order to keep the waters stirred (after all, crystals have a tendency to settle) we must pray daily, read the Bible, learn about our faith and participate in the life of the parish. Our spiritual growth also requires assistance from our parents, friends and the church. Otherwise the grace we receive never has an opportunity to transform us. It takes more than just adding water to make a follower of Jesus. We need to be stirred.

Grow: How can I stir up God's grace?