

Back to Basics: The Renewal of Holy Water

by Karen Pourbabaee

"...the ministry of the church uses the stuff of the earth-bread and wine, gestures and postures, oil and water-to bring holiness into our lives." Scott Hahn

Imagine a group of summer-starved children frolicking through sprinklers on a sizzling summer day. Smiles erupt and giggles penetrate the heated atmosphere. That's the picture of refreshment...of renewal! Into the dreary day, new life is infused!

As Jesus descended into the waters of the Jordan River, the Church Fathers taught that during the moments of His Baptism, Jesus sanctified all the waters of the world. He made them living and life-giving! Renewing!

Water has a magnificent renewal factor. We begin our physical lives in water in the womb. We begin our spiritual lives awash in the waters of Baptism. And throughout our lives we begin our worship in the sanctuary with water, dipping our hands into the consecrated liquid and pronouncing a blessing. Water marks all our beginnings.

Holy water is ordinary water that has been blessed for devotional use by a priest. It is considered a sacramental, a sacred sign which bears resemblance to a sacrament and prepares us to receive grace and disposes us to cooperate with it.

(CCC 1667-1670) As we receive the sacramental of holy water, we should magnify its meaning and symbolism to further enrich our spiritual lives:

- 1) Holy water "**signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit**" as St. Thomas taught
- 2) Holy water is a **reminder and renewal of our Baptism**
- 3) Holy water is a **provision of protection from the oppression of evil** ; as St. Teresa of Avila wrote:
"There is nothing the devils flee from more-without returning-than holy water."

Let holy water renew you and bring holiness into your life!

Dear Lord,

Let me be renewed again and again by the devout and purposeful use of holy water in my life as I contemplate the symbolism behind this seemingly routine act. With each drop, I open myself to the grace of the Holy Spirit, remember and renew my Baptism, and find protection from evil in the battlefields of this world. Amen.