

Breaking Water

When Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles opened our Truth and Love Conference last week, his words about how we participate in Jesus' baptism brought this to mind. C.S. Lewis describes a diver breaking the water's surface then descending into the depths to retrieve treasure from the ocean floor. He breaks the water once more in ascent, joyfully holding out his 'catch' for the world to see. So Jesus reclaims our true natures as the Father's beloved sons and daughters from the depths of enslavement (Gal. 4:3-7; Rom. 8:15-18). In so doing, He reveals His glorious mercy through grateful children.

I marveled at the Archbishop's clarity; due to Jesus' baptism (and baptism of suffering of Calvary), we who were slaves to the world's system of defining ourselves can be free and shining expressions of the Father's design. He cleared the way for people like me who experience same-sex attraction to forego all worldly claims (LGBTQ, etc.) upon our identities. Instead, we can settle deeply into the truth of who we are as children of the Father who delights in engaging with us in order to impart what we need to grow into maturity.

No small or easy thing, this baptism of Jesus and our own which makes all things new. The stakes are huge, for us and for others; in a world that invites persons made in His image to create their own 'gender' reality, we uphold a deeper truth of the Father's claim upon His children. Let's start 2017 by actively engaging with our own baptism and the Father's will for our sonship and daughterhood. Toward that end, I would encourage you to:

Behold the Lamb; we become what we behold. Turn off your screens (after you read this of course) and be still before the Crucified. It helps to simply gaze upon the Cross, which conveys in an instant the watery death He died and His ascent. In the Cross lies all that we need to know: the Son won back for us our true selves. Gazing on the Beloved mediates who we are as beloved children.

Devour Scripture; we become what we eat. Meditate on verses that summon who He is and who we are. The aforementioned passages from St. Paul are a good starting point, as is Song of Songs, a love letter from the Father to His kids. Open the Book and let it permeate you. I memorize key verses so I can summon the truth at hard moments in the day.

Listen to the Father's voice; we become what we hear. Turn off devices and be still. Listen in quiet to what He wants to say; His sheep hear His voice (JN 10:3). Don't worry if at first all you hear is clutter. He loves your effort and will honor it. Quiet your heart in the Spirit of Jesus who upon breaking the water heard: 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased' (Matt. 3:17). You please Him; He loves you, His child.