



Epiphany Words

An Advent to Candlemas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney

Water

Tuesday 14th January



Tributary of river beas, by Shivraj Panwar (via Wikimedia)

Psalm 8

- ¹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
- ² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
- ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
- ⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals^[a] that you care for them?
- ⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God,^[b]
and crowned them with glory and honour.
- ⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
- ⁷ all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,
⁸the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
⁹O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

To reflect

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Luke 3.15-17

Water is essential for human life – to drink, to wash, for Baptism. Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan and John the Baptist told the people that he would baptise with water but someone more powerful would come and do far more than baptise.

Water is part of the Baptism liturgy today, whether water is poured over someone's head or by full immersion. The prayer over the water during the Baptism Service speaks of the many times water has been involved in God's history with humans through time – at the beginning of Creation, in the Garden of Eden, in the Exodus, in the rainbow and in Jesus' baptism.

Today you're invited to reflect on the role water plays in your life and to prayer the Baptismal prayer over water and consider what it means to you today.

Prayer over the Water during the Baptism Service (Scottish Episcopal Church, 2006)

Holy God, well-spring of life,
in your love and justice,
you use the gift of water to declare your saving power.
In the beginning your Spirit moved over the face of the waters.
By the gentle dew, the steady rain,
you nourish and give increase to all that grows;
you make the desert a watered garden.
You command the wildness of the waves;
when the storm rages you calm our fear;
in the stillness you lead us to a deeper faith.
In the life-giving rivers and the rainbow
Israel discerned your mercy.
You divided the Red Sea to let them pass from slavery in Egypt
to freedom in the Promised Land.
In the waters of Jordan
penitents found forgiveness in the baptism of John.
There, Jesus your beloved child
was anointed with the Holy Spirit,
that he might bring us
to the glorious liberty of the children of God.
Send upon this water and upon your people
your holy, life-giving Spirit.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.