



*Baptismal Service - Artist: Mounira  
Original: St. Anthony of Padua Maronite Catholic Church*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In today's Second Reading, from The Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (the very passage we hear proclaimed at the Easter Vigil – the first proclamation of scripture once all the lights come on), the Apostle asks if we do not know that we who were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death, so that baptized into His death, we might also be made partakers of His Resurrection. You see, the very first generation of Christians were at risk of forgetting their Baptism and its meaning for them. Is it any wonder that we 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians have an even more precarious understanding of Baptism?

Quickly, in Mounira's work, three things are held together: the Lord's Baptism, the Eucharistic Life, the Washing of Feet. We see the first and the third; where's the second? Well, recall, that Saint John, in his Gospel account of the Last Supper, gives no attention to the meal, the bread and wine, the words of institution, the communion of believers. Why? I like to think that the Eucharist was so much a part of the Community of John, that the familiar, the treasured, the reality that shaped their living, was so clear to them that John had no need to remind them. Eucharist was so much a part of them, indeed, they were Eucharistic, that even when its retelling is absent, their Eucharistic faith was not diminished. I wonder if that would be true of us – with continued suspension of public celebration of the Eucharist.

What Saint John, with words, and Mounira, with image, do include is the Washing of Feet. The example of Eucharistic Living Our Lord gives at that same Last Supper. Eucharist is Service. What is depicted in the image is the integral connection between Baptism and Eucharist. The Lord's Baptism is a commission to serve, to live sacrificially, to offer His life, an offering memorialized in the Eucharist. Our Baptism is incomplete without Eucharist; our Eucharist makes no sense without our appreciation of Baptism. Our Baptism makes of us Living Altars, upon which we offer the holy sacrifice of lives lived in service. (If you have ever attended a Baptism Preparation session at Annunciation, I know you know what I'm saying: a walk-through of Baptism always concludes with a reflection on its connection to the Eucharistic Altar of Sacrifice.)

Do you not know, Saint Paul asks, that we who were baptized, were baptized into Christ's Death and Resurrection? Of that same mystery of Our Lord's Death and Resurrection, Saint Paul says elsewhere: when we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim His Death until He comes. Saint Paul beholds, and asks of us the same, the unity of the one mystery of Baptism and Eucharist.

Of course, there is more. We are people of Baptism and Eucharist. The Lord continues His life-saving and life-bestowing Death and Resurrection in us. As the Anglican Book of Common Prayer says it: In the midst of life, we are in death. Additionally, in Mounira's depiction, I believe Our Lord is washing the feet of a woman – Mary Magdalen, the Apostle to the Apostles. The clothes are red, a sure sign of Mary Magdalen. The Churches of the East have always been more comfortable with the role of women in the life of the Church...maybe we'll catch up someday.

Taking the two thoughts in the above paragraph and holding them together, I share with you my experiences in these weeks of pandemic and stay-at-home and social distancing. Because the work of the Church has continued. Since we were last together, two of our own have died in the Lord: Bertie Harper and Anna Rita Heuck. Both faithful women who loved the Church, and loved you in the Church. Both were buried with the prayers of the Church at graveside; we hope to remember them in the intentions at Mass in the months to come. They have joined the company of the Holy Women of Annunciation, and hold us in prayer. Since we were last together, two others have been joined to us in Holy Baptism: Amelia Kathleen and Miriam Rose. Two very young women called to the life of faith. May the Lord, in His providence, guide them always in the ways of sacrificial, Eucharistic service, raising up more Holy Women of Annunciation! Wonderful is this Communion of Saints, born anew in Baptism, nourished in the Eucharist! Let us bless the Lord. And give Him thanks.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Grogan

**Please Note: We had hoped to resume public Mass today, Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, but conditions in Hamilton County are alarming, and all caution should be exercised. The resumption is postponed until at least next week. PLEASE STAY ALERT FOR FUTURE PARISH COMMUNICATIONS.**

**We had also hoped to record the Sunday Mass for later viewing online. With the postponement, that is put on hold. We intend to resume recording and online posting, one way or another, next week.**

**Finally, please keep me in prayer, as I have a stress echo test scheduled for Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, in the morning. This was to be the first day of resumed public weekday Mass. Again, plans are being adjusted. Resumption of weekday Mass will be communicated as soon as start-up is reasonable.**