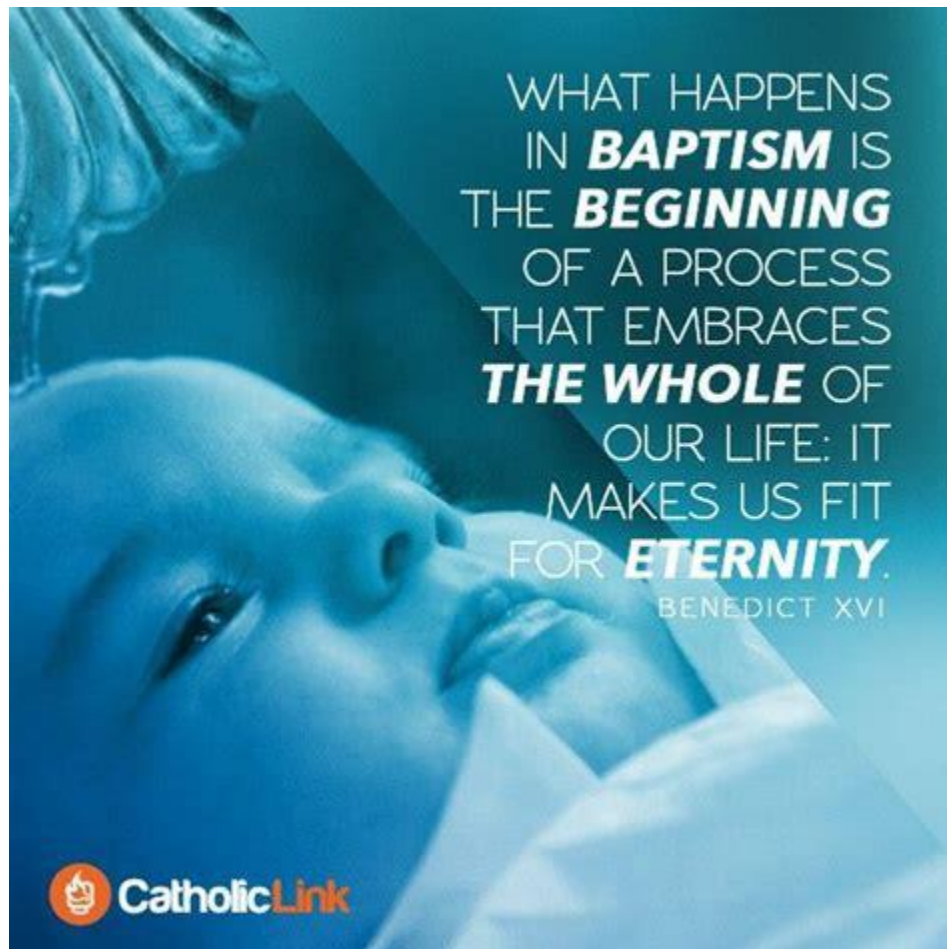


**FROM FATHER JOHN:** *“Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name; make known among the nations his deeds. Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds. Glory in his holy name; rejoice, O hearts that seek the LORD! Look to the LORD in his strength; seek to serve him constantly. You descendants of Abraham, his servants, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He, the LORD, is our God; throughout the earth his judgments prevail. He remembers forever his covenant which he made binding for a thousand generations -- Which he entered into with Abraham and by his oath to Isaac.” ~ Psalm 105*

***Rejoice, O hearts that seek the Lord!!!***



In the gospel passage for the Mass of the Lord's Supper (John 13), it says to us this: "He came to Simon Peter who said to him, 'Master, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I am doing you do not understand now, but you'll understand later.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.'" Peter said to our Lord Jesus by replying, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."

Unless we allow our Lord Jesus to wash us, we will have no inheritance with him. So what does that mean? What does that mean when Jesus says that we must be washed by him? What is he pointing to? What is he driving at? What does he want for us? He wants us to be washed clean of our sins. How does he go about doing that?

Well, the simple answer is, he goes about doing that as He suffers and dies for us on the cross. He sacrifices his life. He's tortured to death. He's beaten. He's scourged. A crown of nails is pounded into his head, and He's nailed to a cross and dies a suffering death. And in sacrificing Himself for us, He washes us, He makes us clean, so that we can have an inheritance with Him.

St. John Chrysostom wrote this: *"If we wish to understand the power of Christ's blood, we should go back to the ancient account of its prefiguration in Egypt. "Sacrifice a lamb without blemish", commanded Moses, "and sprinkle its blood on your doors." If we were to ask Moses what he meant and how the blood of an irrational beast could possibly save men and women endowed with reason, his answer would be that the saving power lies not in the blood itself, but in the fact that it is a sign of the Lord's blood. In those days, when the destroying angels saw the blood on the doors, he did not dare to enter. So how much less will the devil approach now when he sees, not that figurative blood on the doors, but the true blood on the lips of believers, the doors of the Temple of Christ.*

*Beloved, do not pass over this mystery without thought, it has yet another hidden meaning which I'll explain to you. I said that water and blood symbolize baptism and the Holy Eucharist. From these two sacraments, the church is born from baptism. Baptism, the cleansing water that gives rebirth and renewal through the Holy Spirit and from the Holy Eucharist."*

There's two things we should notice here; that we should take note of when we read these scriptures leading up to our Lord Jesus's death and when we read the Passion narrative of Jesus's death. The first is this, the body and blood of Christ, which comes to us from the cross when His body and blood was shed for us, is fed to us in the Holy Eucharist every time we come to Mass. His Body and Blood, the Eucharist, protects us from evil. The Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Body and Blood of Christ, protects us from evil, protects us from the devil. If the devil would not approach the doors that had blood on them in ancient Israel, he will not approach us when we have the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus, on our lips, on our mouths, in our hearts, in our soul.

The second thing we should note is that when Our Lord Jesus says to Simon Peter, unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me; He's speaking of the waters of baptism. The waters of baptism where each and every one of us who are baptized have been cleansed from sin. The waters of baptism that come from Jesus's side, as he hangs on the cross; as a centurion puts his sword into Jesus' side and water and blood flows from our Lord Jesus.

The water is the water of baptism. The flesh and blood is the body of Christ that we are fed with. In the crucifixion, our Lord Jesus gives us these two great gifts. The waters of baptism to cleanse us from our sins, and the Eucharist to sustain us, to strengthen us to fight against evil, to resist the temptation that the devil puts in front of us. It is in the saving action of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross that He gives the church these two sacraments that come from the cross, that give us light, that lead us to eternal life.

It's an amazing thing that Jesus does as He dies on the cross; He gives us these great gifts for our spiritual renewal, to save us, to redeem us, to lift us up, to make us whole, to bring us home to the Heavenly Kingdom. Christ dies on the cross, and not just that, He gives us the church and these Sacraments as gifts to save us.

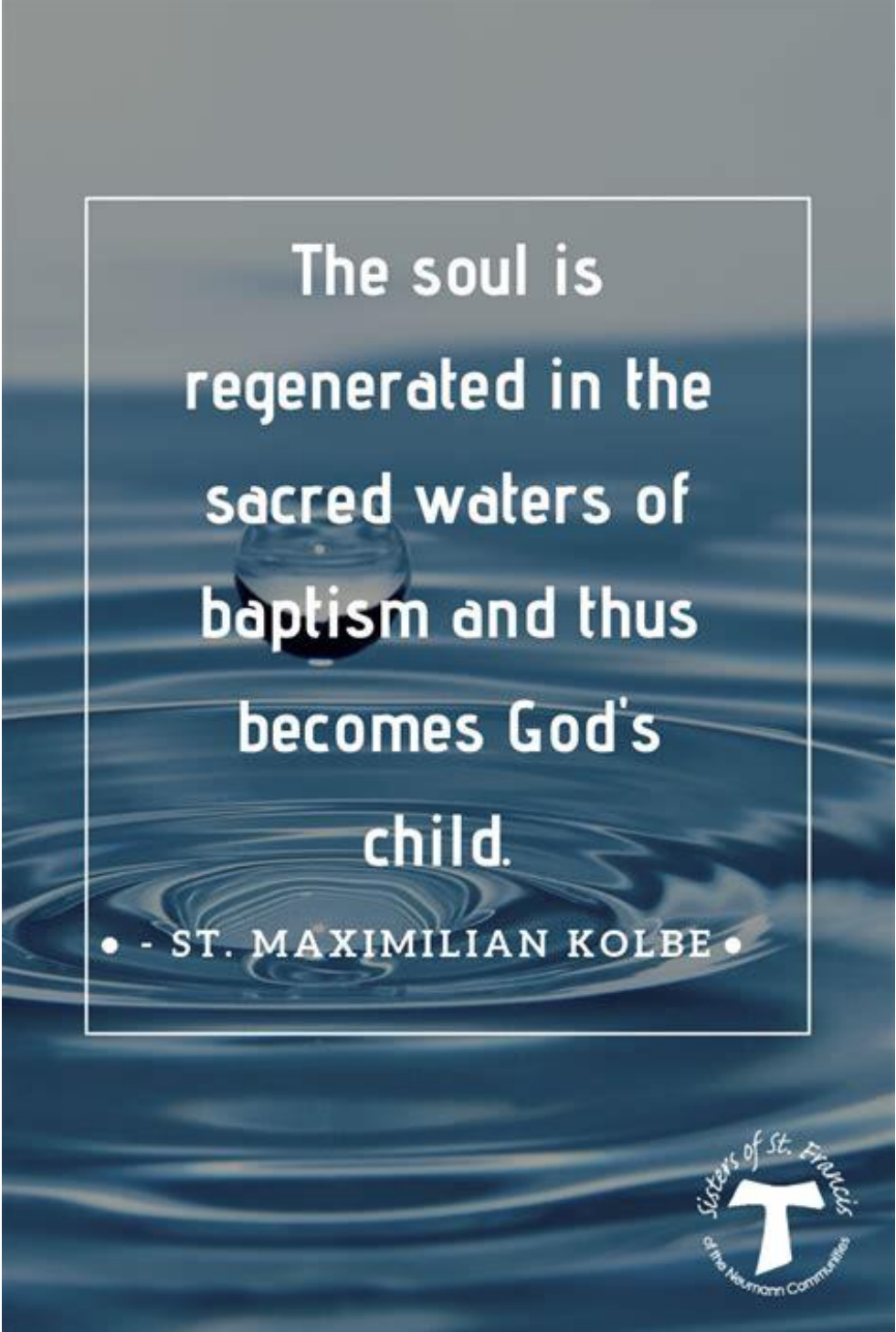
One of the greatest artists of all time was Renoir. He was struck with terrible, terrible arthritis. Horrible arthritis in a day when there was no medicine to offer relief. If you had arthritis, you just had to suffer. Renoir was basically crippled. Yet, he kept painting. He kept painting, even though his hands were twisted and gnarled, even though his wrists and arms and spine were ravaged with arthritis. He was wracked with terrible pain. He couldn't stand as he worked, so he had to sit. He was barely able to paint with those arms that barely worked. Every stroke of the brush was painful. At times, it was so painful that beads of perspiration would flow down his face, and tears would come from his eyes, but he kept painting. Each and every day, he kept painting, and this went on for twenty years, the last twenty years of his life.

And, today, art critics will tell you, the paintings from those last twenty years were his greatest works. They were the most beautiful. They were the most lively. They were the ones you'd look at and they would burst with life and color and truth and beauty. The works from those years, when he suffered so much and kept painting, were his most spectacular works.

One day someone asked him why he submitted his body to such terrible pain. He replied simply, "the pain passes, but the beauty remains."

The extreme pain that our Lord Jesus suffered on the cross, it has passed, but the beauty remains, and the beauty that remains is the beauty of God's great love for us, that the Son of God would do all this for you, for me, for all of us. The pain Our Lord Jesus suffered has passed. The beauty of his love remains with us each and every day.

May God bless you and all those who love the Lord.



The soul is  
regenerated in the  
sacred waters of  
baptism and thus  
becomes God's  
child.

• - ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE •

