

Prayer for the Blessing of Water

by St. Basil the Great

O Lord God Almighty, You are blessed, mighty in everything and worker of miracles. You made the heavens and the earth and the sea out of bodiless and formless chaotic darkness, and your spirit hovered over the waters.

You created man, dust out of the earth, and gave life to him with your all holy breath. You gave him as a select portion the Garden of Eden in the east, and made the whole world subservient to him. But because of the temptation of the serpent, who deceived him like a child, feeding him the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he was divested of his glory and was expelled from paradise, clad in patched up leaves. Yet you did not abandon your servant, but had pity on his generations.

You performed many miracles among the race of men. And at the end of time you sent your Only Begotten Son from the paternal bosom. He came and took on body from the holy Virgin, and went out to seek the prodigal whom the Adversary had taken out from the paradise of life, and pursuing him like an evil beast, wounded him with the death-bearing poisons of different kinds of passions, making him wander and stray over wild paths and fields.

But your beneficent Only Begotten called with a sweet voice, saying: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest... with an easy yoke and a light burden." (Matt 11:28). And through his beneficence he gathered all and brought them to the River Jordan. And he saw the fearful dragon nestled in the waters, who wanted to swallow men... Thereupon your Only Begotten Son going into the waters, with his great power trampled him under his heels and destroyed the great beast according to the prophet who predicted: "You broke to pieces the head of the dragon over the water." (Psalm 73:13 LXX).

There, O Father, you revealed his divinity by calling upon him and saying: "That is my beloved son," and the Holy Spirit appeared in dazzling light as he descended in the form of a dove. For that reason, the Forerunner John the Baptist pointed him, saying: "Behold, the Lamb of God who bears the sins of the world." (John 1:29). Thereafter he ordered all to go down into the water and trample the power of the Adversary under their feet. And after cleansing all of the filth of sin, he adorned them anew, and sealing them with the sign of the Cross as one fold and one shepherd, he sheltered them in his courts as the Holy catholic Church. He reinforced it with prophets, fortified it with apostles, clad it with crown through martyrs, made joyful with the word of the Gospel, so that all may rejoice in peace; young men and maidens, old men and children, and all souls may give thanks to God with joy and gladness.

For this feast today is divine and celestial, holy and venerable. And the rise of the divine rays of the light of the Holy Spirit is resplendently shining in the world. Today that light cleanses the waters, enlightens mankind and makes them celestial beings.

Today the earth is honored to become a new heaven, for the Son of God appears on earth and walks with men. Today he comes to the River Jordan. Going in, he cleanses the waters and enlightens mankind so that they would be purified through water

and become alive in spirit. Today the Triune Godhead has manifested himself on earth and the entire world is full of his glory. The Father testifies from heaven, saying: "That is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." And the Holy Spirit comes down upon him in the likeness of a dove...

And now, O Lord, come near us through your Holy Spirit and bless this water, that this may make homes prosperous, heal the sick, save souls as well as bodies, and be useful for fulfilling all needs. For you are merciful God who loves mankind. Let all who devise evil for your servants take flight from this. Let us call upon your great, glorified and wonderful name, O Lord, and raise to you blessing and glory to the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

And now, O Lord our God, bless this water and make it for the cleansing of your servants. Drive away from this every harm and evil speck and disease and all the tyranny of Satan. Implant in it the graces of your all powerful Holy Spirit, namely healing and health and victory over the power of the most evil one. And through this, let all of us become worthy of your help, your acceptance, healing, blessing and cleansing, and let us ceaselessly glorify the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always and unto the ages of ages. Amen.