

## Message from Martha

Dear Friends:

I hope this finds you well and already enjoying a new year! We have so much for which to be thankful and so much to which we might look forward. And it is always interesting to me that our secular chronologically based new year comes a month after our liturgical new year. We have already been immersed in preparing for a new year as we did so for the Birth of Christ. And we are always preparing for a new time, the time which is to come, the ultimate inbreaking of the Kingdom.

We have come to the manger, guided by a holy radiance, and now begin, again, our work to know Christ more deeply and to make Christ known to others.

As Christmas and Epiphany and New Year intersect, a special space might be created for reflection. How can we be our fullest selves in this new time? How can we live into our baptismal covenant in this new time?

Well, the Sunday after Epiphany is the Baptism of our Lord and there is not better time to recommit, to reflect, and to respond to the love of God poured upon us. May you know today and everyday, and especially next Sunday, that you belong, that you are beloved, and that you are becoming the fullest selves you can be in God in whom we live and move and have our being.

As you have probably already gathered, I love poetry, so I offer you one of my favorites to ponder as we approach the holy water of baptism:

### **COMING TO WATER**

by Nicola Slee

COME TO water. It may be lake, river or sea.  
It does not matter, so long as the source is clean.  
Each makes its own kind of poultice for sickness.  
Here you will find healing,  
though it may not be in the form you are seeking.

You must build a necessary hunger before you get there.  
You must be needy. You must be hurting.  
You must be lonely as the seabird's cry  
far out near the horizon.

After arriving, you must wait for a long while.  
You will still be arriving.  
Walk and walk and walk by the water's edge.

Sit for long stretches at a time  
gazing out at its many surfaces.  
Think of nothing.  
Let time and the passages of daylight and darkness  
pass over and under you.

If it is dry and the sun beats golden on you,  
close your eyes and bask in the miracle of warmth.  
If it rains, whether sweetly or fiercely,  
let your face be turned upwards to receive its blessing,  
Your skin be covered in wetness.  
If a storm should holler and range and shake the skies,  
walk out in it, let your body be blasted  
by an energy that knocks you sideways,  
emptying your limbs of all resistance.

You must go to the water.  
You must take what it offers.  
You must yield what it asks of you.  
You must submit to its tenderness.  
You must leave when it is time, though it is never time for leaving.  
You must walk away still thirsty,  
with the sound of its pouring ringing in your ears.

Blessings on your way,  
Martha