

RICHARD ROHR – SACRAMENTAL WATERS

*Everything is in some way sacramental.
All depends on the receptiveness and openness of our hearts.*

John Chrysostom, "The World of the Icon and Creation"

Father Richard writes of the soul of all creation:

I think of **soul** as anything's ultimate meaning, which is held within. Soul is the blueprint inside of every living thing that tells it what it is and what it can become. When we meet anything at that level, we will respect, protect, and love it. Sadly, many human beings haven't found their own blueprint or soul, so they cannot see it anywhere else. My sense, after being a priest for over fifty years, is that we would have done much better to help Christians **discover** their souls instead of "save" them. It's there of course, but it seems to be dormant or disconnected. They aren't aware of the inherent truth, goodness, and beauty shining through everything.

Such connection and presence is as freely available as the air we breathe and the water we drink. This is surely why John the Baptist moved his initiation rite out of the Temple, away from the priestly purity codes (of which he was well aware), and down by the riverside in the wilderness. Jesus "submitted" to this off-beat ritual, which we now call baptism. Yet now baptismal ceremonies are most often held in church buildings, usually disconnected from anything natural except the water itself.

Theologian Grace Ji-Sun Kim describes how water, used in the sacrament of baptism, connects us to God and all life:

Christians have a spiritual relationship with water. In the sacrament of baptism, water is necessary. As an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, baptism marks how one becomes part of the family of God....

Baptismal actions show a deeper understanding of who God is and how God connects with us in each and every day through water all around us.... God uses the waters of baptism to weave our whole selves into God's own life, in gracious love and mercy. Baptism reminds us of water's vitality for our world and teaches us to seek its lifegiving, cleansing, and refreshing gift. Water is essential for life on Earth and in the "kin-dom" of God....

The sacrament of baptism becomes a symbol that all water is sacred, not just the water present in the baptismal font. Because it is sacred, we need to honour water, take care of water, and treat it with holiness, reverence, and love. Through the baptismal waters we begin a faith journey that awakens us to the beauty of Earth and all of God's creation. We learn that we human beings belong to a community connected to one another through water. We are all made of water and sustained by water. The waters of baptism run through the creeks, rivers, lakes, and oceans of the world, providing life to all living things. Baptism connects Christians to all living things in water's cleansing flows.