

Holy Baptism

or

Are You Ready to Die?!

What is baptism?

Yes, you, I'm asking you!

Some say baptism is like a magic ticket that you need to get into heaven.

TICKET TO HEAVEN

Your Name

ADMIT ONE

This ticket is valid under
certain conditions as set
forth in the accompanying
terms and conditions.

Signature of Ticket Holder



Others see it as a kind of
washing or getting cleaned up



But actually, baptism is like dying, and
more to the point, since water is
required, drowning....



You think I'm joking, don't
you?

But listen to the Book of
Common Prayer

- Grant O Lord, that all who are baptized into the **death** of Jesus Christ.....”BCP 306
- “In [baptism“] we are buried with Christ in his **death**.....”id.

And listen to what St Paul
says:

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into **death** in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

-Romans 6:4

- Which is a fancy way of saying that if you really want to live this life, **you need to know how to die** ... to things like being **in control** and loving **anger** and wallowing in **self pity**....

and the church fathers

agree....

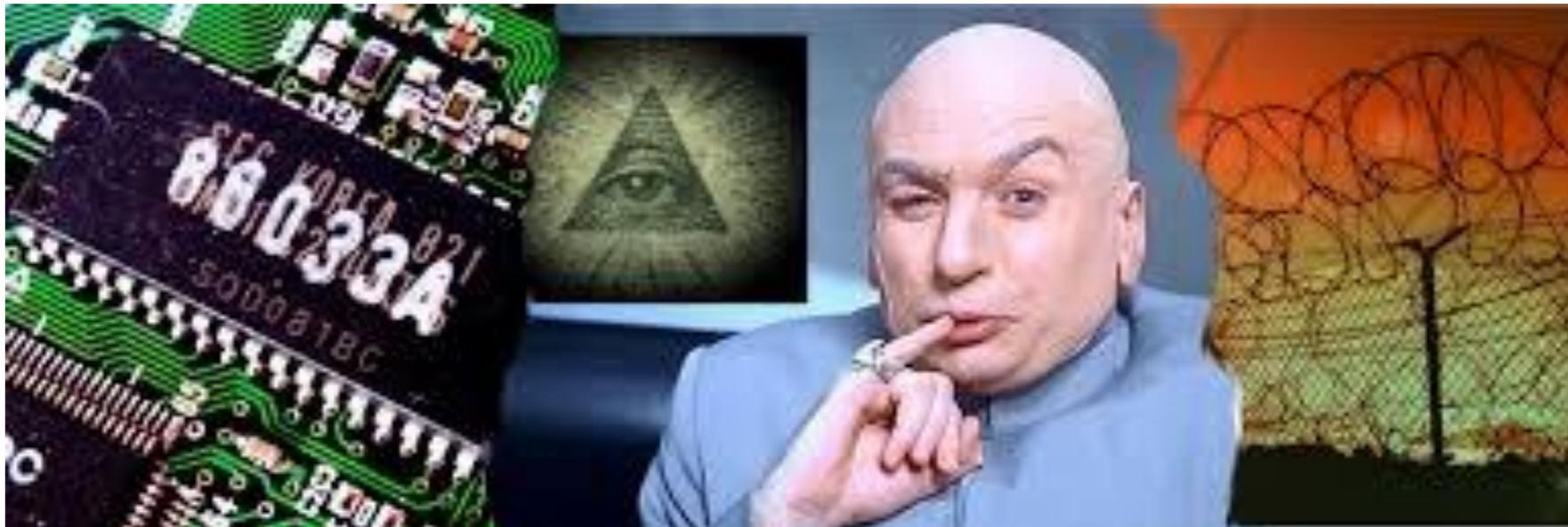
you go down into the water; but
grace seals your soul ...you go down
dead in your sins, and you come up
alive in righteousness”

cyril of jerusalem

- so why must we die in baptism????????????

Here's why.....

- Our natural desire is to be **number one**
- Many of us love **power** and prestige and fame
- Others love money and **security**
- Nearly all of us love to **control** other people, places and things.



Jesus brings another way

- In Jesus, we are offered a chance to become who we were always meant to be....
- People who **love** one another, **serve** one another, who look out for the needs of our neighbors.

DAY OF SERVICE



Not because we have to earn God's love....

- but once we realize the overwhelming love God has for us, it's only natural to want to be part of that love....

DAUGHTER OF GOD

KNOW THAT YOU
WERE FORMED BY
GOD'S HANDS,
DREAMED UP IN HIS
HEART,  & PLACED
IN THIS  WORLD
FOR A PURPOSE.

- It's hard to think of a more important message for people to receive, especially these days, when so many find life to be without meaning and their own lives without purpose.

You see....

- God made all things for good....

Which is represented in the story of the garden of Eden

- where God walks about with the first human beings and tells them only one thing is forbidden: the knowledge of good and evil....

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil



But of the fruit of the tree which is in
the middle of the garden, God said,
*You shall not eat of it, neither shall you --Gen. 3:3

That's kind of strange when you think about it, eh?

- Isn't knowing the difference between good and evil something every self-respecting human should know?
- What do YOU think?

- But think a little more.....

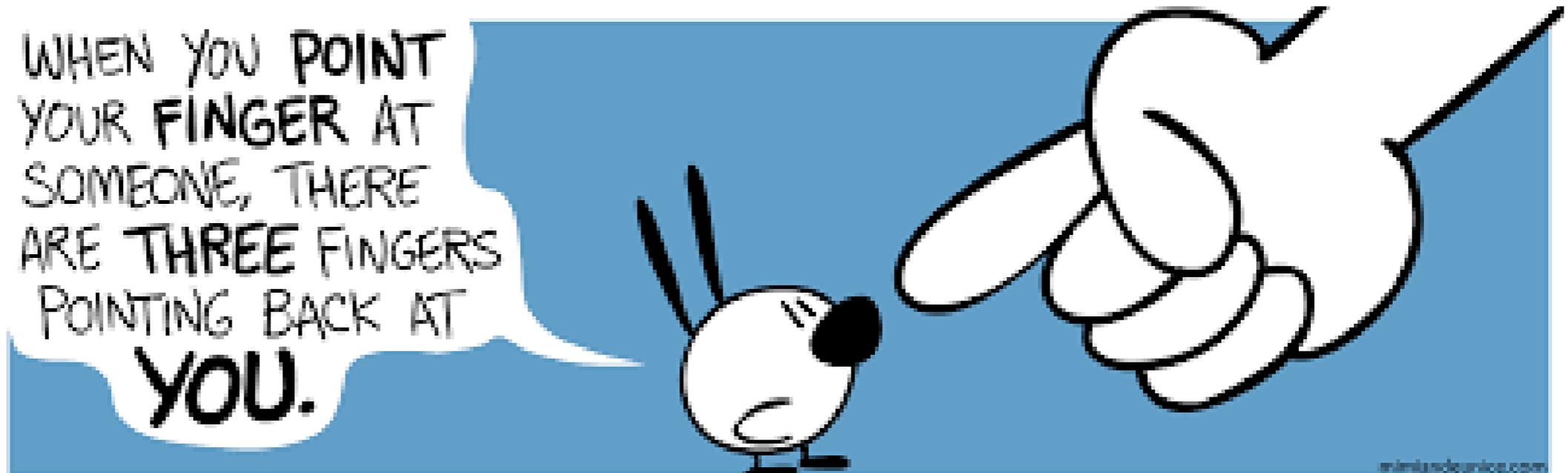
- In every human conflict, husband and wife, brother and sister, or nations at war, what does each side say about.....

Who is right
and
who is wrong?



**Being right isn't
nearly as
important as
knowing when to
shut up.**

- Yes, both sides in every conflict insist they are right and good and the other fellow is wrong and evil.....



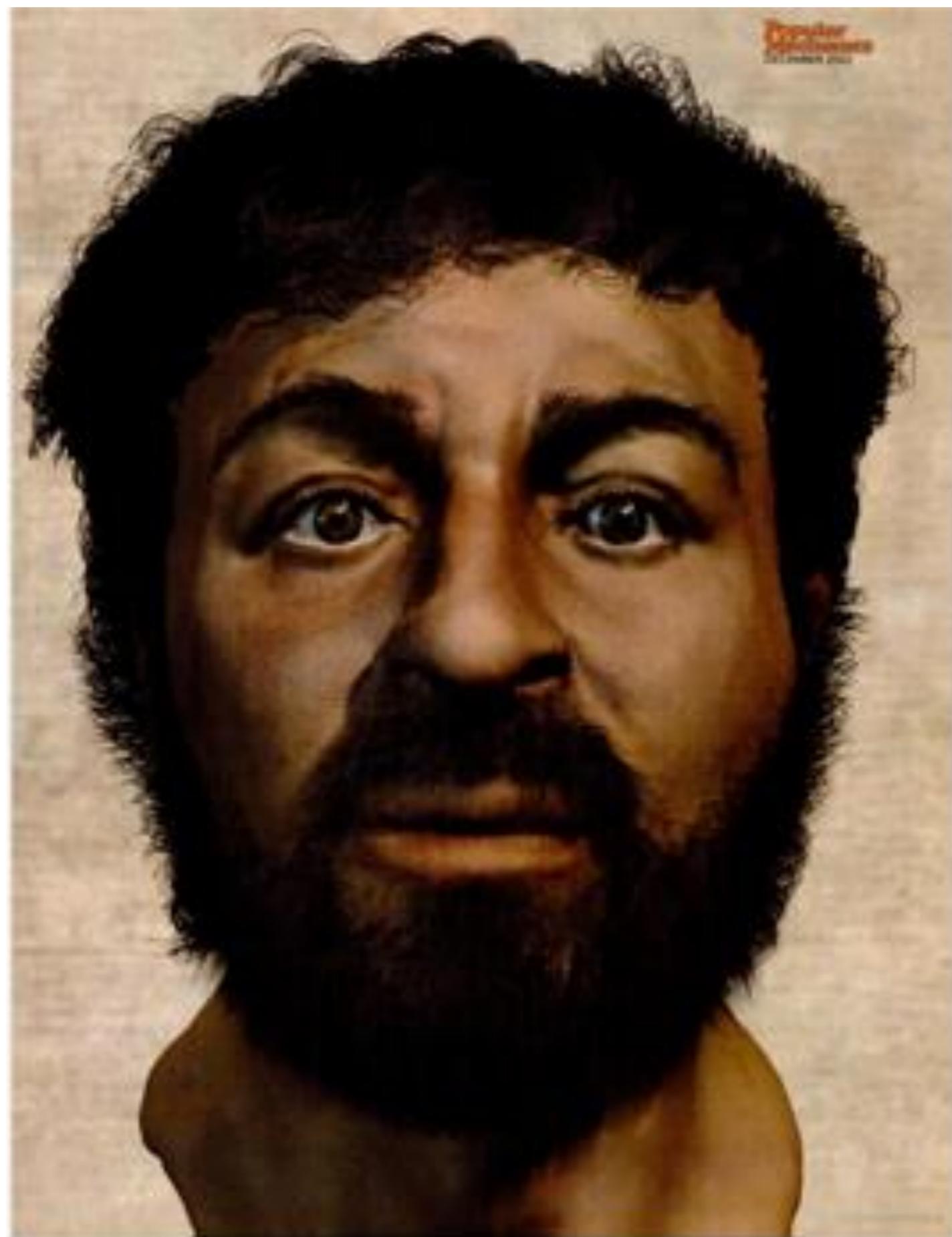
so how well are we handling

- the knowledge of good and evil??????????

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor



- Into this mess steps Jesus,



- who is not about judging or condemning but who is all about helping us to tune into the Mystery that creates all things, whom we call God.....



- And we tune into God by a series of steps



First, by recognizing

that life using only our own power and control becomes a real
mess very quickly

I want you to know
that I would support
any choice that I
tell you to make.



some**ee**cards
usee card

Second,

- by acknowledging that we need **help** to become who we are meant to be....



KEEP
CALM
AND
ASK FOR
HELP

Asking for help does not mean
that we are weak or incompetent.
It usually indicates an advanced
level of honesty and intelligence.

-Anne Wilson Schaef



inspiratory

Third,

- by knowing 2 things about God:
- There is one....AND!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- It's not you!

- At this point, it's helpful to spend some time reflecting on what my life is like when I'm running the ship.....
- And looking at myself in a very deep and searching way, not excusing myself, but facing things I'm ashamed of, embarrassed by, would rather not remember....



“ You can learn
great things
from your
mistakes
when you aren't
busy denying
them.”

Suggested Defects of Character for the Moral Inventory

Dishonesty	Conceit	Jealousy
Selfishness	Intolerance	Arrogance
Resentments	Envy	Remorse
Egotism	Bigotry	Self Pity
Fear	Laziness	Revenge
Anger	Frustration	Worry
Hatred	Impatience	Anxiety
False Pride	Condemnation	Uncharitable
Self Seeking	Sense of Inadequacy	Self Reliance

The image features a motivational quote written in white, hand-drawn, uppercase letters. The text is arranged in six lines: "YOU CAN'T", "CHANGE", "WHAT YOU", "REFUSE", "TO", and "CONFRONT". The background is a photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a body of water, with a bright sun low on the horizon creating a lens flare and reflecting on the water's surface. The overall tone is inspirational and encouraging.

YOU CAN'T
CHANGE
WHAT YOU
REFUSE
TO
CONFRONT

- And then, with a priest or counselor or mentor, share those things in detail....letting it all hang out...



- And as we empty ourselves out, we create space for God's spirit to enter our lives and begin to teach us a new way to live.....
- A way that is not frightened or defensive or justifying, but which slowly comes to experience the deep compassion and love God has for you...

This can feel a lot like dying

- because it **is** a lot like dying...



dying to....

- our need to control
- our worship of money
- our old ways of thinking about right and wrong

- and replacing all of that with faith in Jesus.....
- which begs the question.....

WHO IS JESUS???

yes, i'm asking YOU!

- In the early days of the church, that was THE question: Who is Jesus?

- So in 325 AD, leaders of the Christian communities from around the world gathered at **Nicea** to come up with an answer to this question, a question that really asks “**What is the nature of God?**”

- After much discussion and prayer, this is what the church elders came up with, it is called the **Nicene Creed**, because it captures our essential beliefs...

THIS IS WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- “We believe,” meaning, faith is NOT a private affair...it’s given and fed and developed IN community, not all by our lonesomes.....WHY???

- Because left on our own, we very often and easily come up with crazy ideas about all sorts of things...and we especially come up with crazy ideas about God. Such as....

God

- Only loves certain people or
- God is a lot like me, only better or
- God is an angry old man in the sky....

**YOU'RE
GOING
TO**

HELL!

GOD

IS

AMERICA'S

**THANK
GOD
FOR
DEAD
SOLDIERS**

•in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.

- Yes, one God, big enough to create through the big bang, patient enough to create through the miracle of evolution.

e persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit





“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being with the
Father.

Through him all things were made.”

- in other words, Jesus is not a creation of God's, Jesus is not a man who was adopted by God, Jesus is not a spirit who only pretended to be a man, but Jesus is fully human and fully divine.....

“For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was **born** of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.”

- Because God loves us, he sends Jesus to show us how to live the way we were always intended to live.

- An unwed teenager becomes his mother...

- We so often worry that God can't handle the various scandals in our lives, forgetting that God entered this world through a scandal, the scandal of a mother pregnant out of wedlock, a capital offense in those days....

“For our sake he was
crucified under Pontius
Pilate,
he suffered, died, and was
buried.”

- Pilate was the Roman governor of Israel at the time.
- Jesus was condemned as a political prisoner and as a threat to the Roman empire.
- **The** best legal minds and the best religious minds of the day condemned him to death....



- Remember all that stuff about how bad we are in telling good and evil apart?????

- If the the best legal and religious minds put to death the Son of God, can we get any worse at distinguishing good from evil?
- Meaning, NOT that we shouldn't try to do so, but when we are judging good and evil, keeping in mind we are often quite likely to get it wrong...

- So maybe we need to hold onto our judgments very lightly, aware that try as we might we just aren't very good at judging....

“On the third day he rose
again
in fulfillment of the
Scriptures”



- We don't know how it happened, no one saw the resurrection itself, a private affair between Jesus and the Father....

- But that it DID happen is evidenced by the frightened followers own experience of the Risen Lord, changing them from people shaking in their boots to fearless teachers of the good news.

- In the resurrection, God says “yes” to Jesus and “no” to our love affair with power and control and death...

- We believe Jesus actually died, and stayed dead for three days, and then was raised to life by God into a transformed body, a body we believe we shall one day receive as well....

“he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the
Father.

He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.”

- Not that he took off like a rocket into space, but that Jesus is now in that other place, the place God occupies in God's fullness, a place we call, for lack of a better word, heaven...

“We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father
and the Son.”



- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity
- He is called the comforter and the advocate
- Comforter because life can still be hard, there is still pain and death and disappointment, and we need comforting
- Advocate because sometimes in our lives as followers of Jesus, we need someone to speak up for God to those who insist that this life is all about power and money and fame...

“ With the Father and
the Son he is worshiped
and glorified.”

- The Holy Spirit is one with God...

“He has spoken
through the
Prophets.”

- When the Jewish people forgot that God wants mercy and kindness and humility, he sent prophets to remind the people...prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah and Amos and finally John the Baptist....

- John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus, and he began baptizing people with water, calling them back to a life of mercy and kindness and humility; and he baptized Jesus....



- And God continues to send the Holy Spirit to speak through prophets today, prophets like Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Oscar Romero and Dorothy Day and Daniel Berrigan...



“We believe in one
holy catholic and
apostolic Church.”

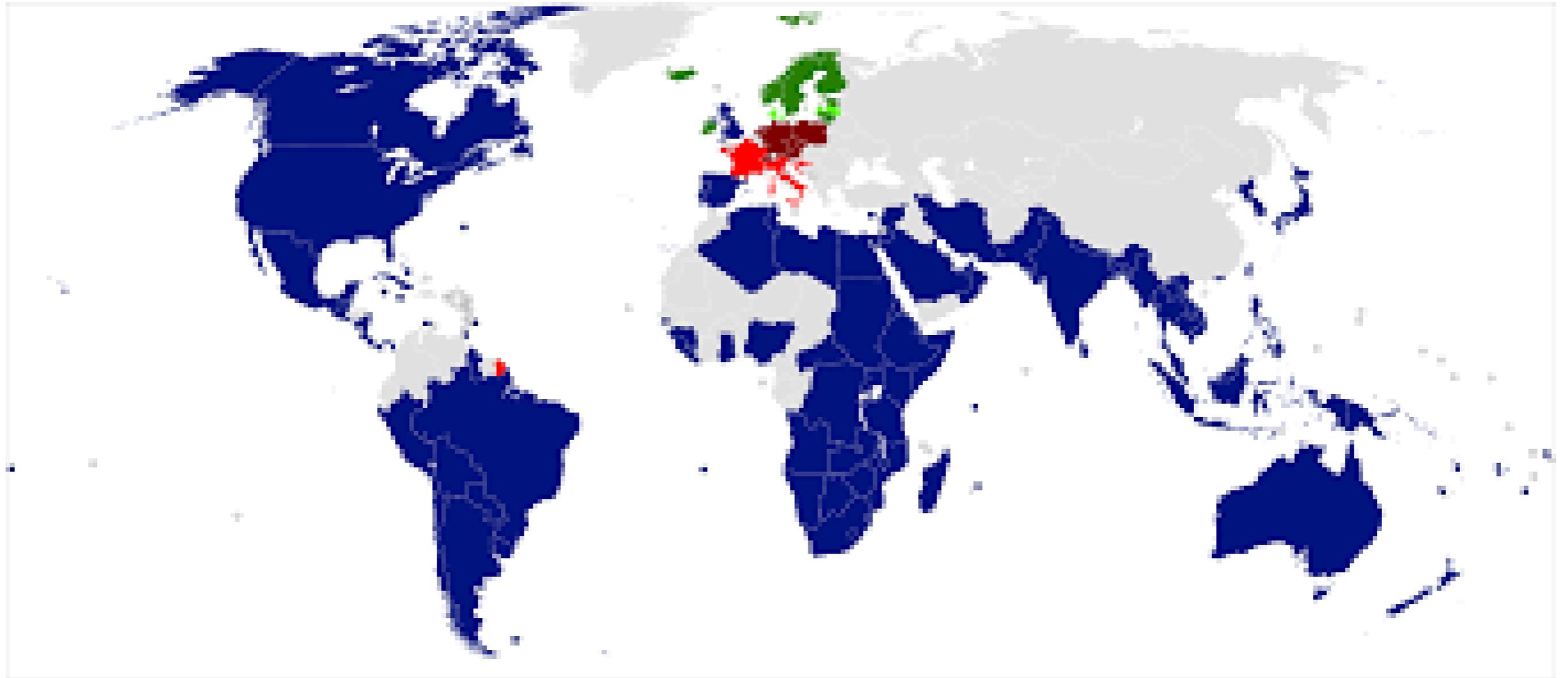
- Yes, we Episcopalians are catholic!
- Meaning, “universal”, meaning our faith is set out in the Nicene Creed, meaning we believe our priests and bishops are descended from the original apostles....

- We are catholic, but not Roman Catholic...

- The Church in England split with Rome in the 1500's back when popes wanted to be kings and kings wanted to be popes....

- The split had everything to do with politics and nothing to do with religious faith....

- We Episcopalians are part of the world-wide Anglican Communion, which began as part of the church of England and spread around the world...



- We believe in 7 sacraments, but the 2 most important are baptism and the Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion, the body and blood of our Lord...
- The other sacraments are marriage, holy orders, confession, confirmation and last rites...



“We acknowledge
one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.”

- Some denominations will baptize you again if you join their group...we believe all baptisms made in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is all that is required...

“We look for the
resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to
come.”

- This is our great hope...that this life is not the only life, that in God there is no death, and since we are all in God, we trust that death is merely a passage way, not the end point....
- Which means we can live fearlessly in this life, by acting with kindness and mercy and humility, even toward our enemies...

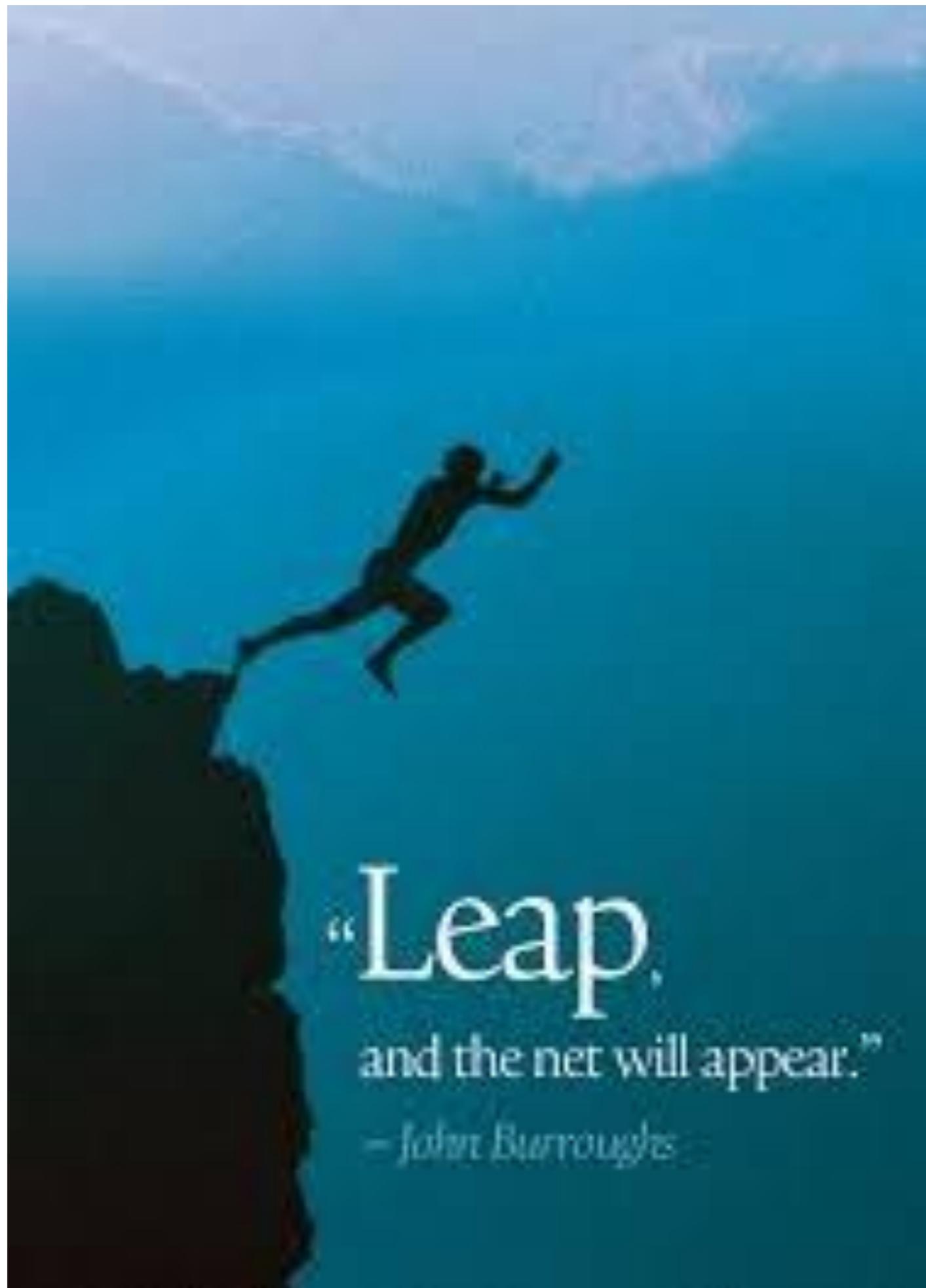
- If that's the life you'd like, you're ready to be baptized...

Ready to die???

and then rise into a new life???

A Life That

- trusts God in all things
- accepts that we are accepted by God
- smiles and loves and serves others because God smiles and loves and serves us!



“Leap,
and the net will appear.”

— John Burroughs

- Is this the life you'd like to live?

if you say **yes**

- you are ready to be
baptized!



Not the end, but the
beginning!

