

## **A Letter to Alice on the Day of Your Baptism**

### ***The First Reading - Psalm 23***

#### ***The Divine Shepherd***

##### ***A Psalm of David.***

<sup>1</sup> *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

<sup>2</sup> *He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside still waters;*

<sup>3</sup> *he restores my soul.*

*He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.*

<sup>4</sup> *Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil,*

*for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.*

<sup>5</sup> *You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.*

<sup>6</sup> *Surely<sup>[e]</sup> goodness and mercy shall follow me*

*all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.*

### ***The Second Reading - Matthew 18:1-5***

#### ***True Greatness***

**18** *At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"<sup>2</sup> He called a child, whom he put among them,<sup>3</sup> and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.*

### ***The Third Reading - Romans 12:3-13***

<sup>3</sup> *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think but to think with sober*

*judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup> We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup> ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> the encourager, in encouragement; the giver, in sincerity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.*

### ***Marks of the True Christian***

*<sup>9</sup> Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; <sup>10</sup> love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers.*

Dear Alice,

You may or may not remember today.

You didn't plan this moment — but your parents did. They believed that baptising you is like making a joyful announcement: *you belong to God's family.*

In time, you will come to know the stories of Jesus. In fact, your parents have already begun to tell you about the man to whom they have entrusted their lives. As you grow, you'll discover that people who loved Jesus wanted to be baptised, even after he was no longer walking among them. Baptism became their way of saying *yes* to the love and life that Jesus offers.

Most of the time, I speak to adults about who Jesus was, what He did, and what it means to belong to

Him. But today, Alice, this letter is for you. I hope that when you one day look back on this day — on this decision that others made on your behalf — you'll understand that your parents and family made a sacred promise, a covenant, that you could not yet make yourself.

You are surrounded by people who love you deeply — parents who brought you into the world, and step-parents who will love and care for you always. Great-grandmother Betty in California, grandparents in heaven, another set of grandparents here with us today, and all your family and friends, near and far, who rejoice that you are part of their lives. Yet none of us has a greater role in this moment than you do. Because, ultimately, your baptism is not about us. It's not even mainly about

you.

It's about God.

The first reading today, from *Psalms 23*, teaches us what God is like — a good shepherd who cares for his sheep no matter what happens. You will come to know this Shepherd through the love and care of your parents, the encouragement and warmth of your family, and the prayers and support of your church family — that's us. This is what baptism truly means: when someone is baptised, they are joined to Jesus — to his dying and rising again. It's as though we are washed into his story: when Jesus died, our old ways of living died with him; when he rose again, we were invited to rise into a new life filled with hope and grace.

Baptism is God's way of saying, "*You belong to Christ. You are made new in Him.*"

In the second reading, *Matthew 18:1–5*, we learn about who Jesus is, and how deeply he loved children. Jesus still tells us that we should be like you — a little child — because in God's kingdom, the greatest ones are those with hearts like yours. So you are very blessed to be yourself. We adults have much to learn from you!

The third reading, from *Romans 12*, shows us what this new life looks like — a life shaped by genuine love, kindness, and faith. And when we look closely, we see that Jesus himself lived every word of it.

Jesus' love was genuine — he reached out to the lonely and forgotten, bringing hope to the hopeless, joy to the joyless, and a voice to the voiceless.

He hated evil — especially when it hurt the weak or silenced the innocent.

He held fast to what was good — even when he was afraid, kneeling in the garden before the cross.

He loved his friends tenderly — washing their feet, sharing their burdens, and calling them his own.

He honoured others above himself — lifting up the least and showing that in God's kingdom, the last shall be first.

He never lost his zeal — but served God with passion and faith all the days of his life.

Alice, our prayer for you is that one day you, too,  
will understand and embody this love — genuine,  
joyful, and courageous.

Today we welcome you into the family of God,  
trusting that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from  
the dead will be at work in you all your life.

With love and blessing,

Shalom,

*Jin Sook Kim (Revd.)*