

Dear Daisy,

I shall baptize you with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit on June 15 in the Year of Our Lord 2025. It is Trinity Sunday in the calendar year of the church, and there's a hymn about describing God as "who, wert, and art, and evermore shall be." Don't worry, I'm not going to continue this letter to you in such formal language.

There's a story about Augustine, a theologian in the 5th century, who took a break from writing a book about the Trinity to walk along the beach. He came across a young child digging a hole in the sand. The girl got up and ran to the beach, filling a container with seawater, then dumping it in the hole. Augustine inquired about what she was doing, and the child replied that she was going to fill her hole with the whole ocean. Amused, Augustine said she could possibly do that.

The child then addressed him directly, saying, "And neither can you fill your little book with the majesty of God the Trinity!" With that, the child disappeared into thin air!

I don't have a message about God's infinite incomprehensibility to share with you, Daisy, but I imagine you are reading this letter when you are about to be confirmed. Peering down the corridor of history, what might I tell you?

Your watchword, which is a verse of scripture that I prayerfully selected for you, is Romans 5:5. The Apostle Paul tells us that God's love has been poured into our hearts. The verb ("has been poured") is perfect passive, meaning the description of an act by something or someone in the past that continues to impact the present and the future. This is grace. Since God's love has been poured upon us, we do nothing to earn or deserve it.

However, Paul is clear that the gift of God's love does not shield us from "suffering" (Romans 5:2–4). The word he chose specifically relates to circumstances and events beyond our control. The apostle never attempted to explain why terrible things happen. Instead, he noted how "suffering produces endurance." We have to wait it out. This is a hard teaching.

I don't know what you will have to endure in your life. The week of your baptism, there was a terrible assassination in our country and countries dropped bombs on each other, killing civilians. There is much suffering and affliction beyond our control.

Paul continues his letter by saying that “endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” I have a story about that.

Perhaps you already know that your mom and I went to college together. There was a pastor there named Weisner. Like your dad and me, his name was also Andrew! This Pastor Andrew was a short man with a big nest of a beard, and when he spoke, his hands would flutter around his beard like small birds. He was Lutheran, and he taught me what Martin Luther said about remembering our baptism every time we wash our face. Remember that God’s love has been poured into you.

This Pastor Andrew prayed for me during some of the most challenging times in my life, yet I don’t remember any of his words. I remember those hands, though. Maybe those hands were offering prayers. He and I would walk together through the campus, and I felt like hope came alongside us. It was a holy mystery.

I hope that when you read this letter, you have adults in your life who will help you endure whatever you must with character and hope. Not only your parents and extended family, but other men and women who will be wise and caring.

You will not remember the day of your baptism, of course. Yet, I like to think that, on June 15 in the Year of Our Lord 2025, there will be prayers fluttering, flittering, and floating all around you, your mom, your dad, your grandparents, and everyone else gathered for worship. I like to think that some of those prayers might perch in your heart and soul, where they will sing to you at unexpected times, perhaps challenging times. This is yet another holy mystery.

As you grow up, I hope to walk alongside you, if only every now and then. I hope to watch you become the person God has called you to be. No one knows the future or what will happen.

But I will remember the words I will say when I touch your forehead with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: May the Spirit of God dwell mightily within you.

Pastor Andrew Taylor-Troutman  
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