**Baptism Now**

*Mark 1:4-11 The Baptism of our Lord*

What causes sacred rituals to shrink?

Instead of River Jordan there’s a font;

instead of Jesus plunging from the brink

to depths of destiny, we have the want

of family for welcoming a child

too young to understand the word or sign.

Do rules of schools require a paper filed?

To be ordained, I had to search for mine.

Instead of wild baptizer now, it’s me,

maternal with a baby there to bless;

yet naming names invokes the power to be,

and Spirit moves on waters, I profess,

to bring Creation’s beauty into sight.

As priest, I hope to stir some waiting chord

to hum in tune with water, oil and light

and wake forgotten songs in ears grown bored.

Let that which parted waters of the sea

to liberate a people once enslaved

make inroads among those who think they’re free.

Let someone sense that God is what they’ve craved,

and turn from those addictions seen as play,

the busy babble of the techno smart,

to seek a crossing to another way

that stirs the deeper waters of the heart.

I pray the flow that springs to foster life

will not be dried to desert in our day!

Our rivers shrink and wastelands now are rife,

and we forget that earth will claim our clay.

The storms and illness that have pulled us down

show us the need to let our lives be changed.

Why wait to see our seaside cities drown,

while we from God’s creation stay estranged?

Baptize us then with that transforming fire

to speak and hear the language of the world.

Let Spirit fall upon us to inspire

the will we need, the wit within us furled.

Let work for nature’s healing be our choice,

not short-term gain that leads to long-term pain.

Let poets, priests and prophets find a voice

to sing creation’s song with power again.

 *Barbara Messner 6 January 2021*