

Confirmation Journal #4

Concluding Thought:

“Through Baptism each child is inserted into a gathering of friends who never abandon him in life or in death.This group of friends, this family of God, into which the child is now admitted, will always accompany him, even on days of suffering and in life’s darkest nights; it will give him consolation, comfort and light.”
- Pope Benedict XVI

“What is Baptism?”

Baptism is the way out of the Kingdom of death into life, the gateway to the Church, and the beginning of lasting communion with God. [1213-1216, 1276-1278]

Baptism is the foundational Sacrament and the prerequisite for all other Sacraments. It unites us with Jesus Christ, incorporates us into his redemptive death on the Cross, thereby freeing us from the power of Original Sin and all personal sins, and causes us to rise with him to a life without end. Since Baptism is a Covenant with God, the individual must say Yes to it. In the baptism of children, the parents confess the Faith on behalf of the children.”

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“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you...”

“Go...and make Disciples of all nations...”

Candidate Name _____
Date Completed _____

Step One: Do the reading assignment (below)

Baptism, Born in the Spirit

“Jesus answered, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.” –John 3:5

“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”-1 Peter 3:21

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”- Matthew 28:19

Baptism is often called the gate of the Church. It is the foundational sacrament, the beginning of our new life in Christ. Many Christians speak of being “born again”; if you have been baptized then you can confidently state that you too have been born again of water and Spirit, just as Jesus says in John 3:5.

“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: “Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.” –CCC 1213

As we see here, baptism does a number of wondrous things. Through this sacrament, we die to sin and are reborn as the adopted sons and daughters of God, becoming incorporated into the mystical body of Christ. We say that we are the adopted children of God to distinguish our relationship with the Father from Christ’s. He (Jesus) is God the Father’s true Son, begotten not made. We are

made members of His family through adoption, at the moment of our baptism.

Baptism is your initiation into the Church. When we are baptized, the stain of Original Sin is washed away and we are filled with sanctifying grace, the very life of God in us. The Holy Spirit comes down to rest upon and live in us. If you are baptized as an adult, the sacrament also cleanses us of any personal sins as well.

All of this is made possible by the power of Jesus Christ. As Peter writes in his first letter, baptism saves us, but it is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21). The water and words of the sacrament have no power except that which is given by Christ.

The Church also teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation. If we understand the effects of Original Sin and the power of baptism, it makes sense that we would hope that everyone be baptized as soon as possible, and this include infants who are too young to necessarily understand exactly what is happening (but then again, no one really understands everything that is happening in the sacrament, the power and grace of God is mysterious and beyond our mortal minds!)

Since the Church teaches the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation, we often run into the question, “What about all the people who have died without having a chance to be baptized? It’s not fair that they will lose Heaven through no fault of their own.”

It’s an honest and fair question. By the grace of God, the Church has an answer.

Step Two: Answer the Questions (below)

1—In your own words, according to Paragraph 1213 of the Catechism, explain what Baptism does for us?

2—We know and celebrate the day of our Birth, but do we were born into Christ? What is the date of your Baptism?

3—What does being a Baptized Christian mean to you?

4—St. Paul tells us that in Baptism we die to sin and are raised in Christ (Romans 6). In what ways are you still suffering under the slavery of sin?

5—Why is the Sacrament called Baptism? What does Baptism mean?

6—What does St. Augustine say about Baptism?

6—What are the 2 principle effects of Baptism? (1262-166) Explain.

7—Christian Initiation is completed by what 3 Sacraments? What does each do?

8—Baptism is necessary for _____.

9—When we are Baptized, we are _____ of sin,
_____ into the family of God and become members of the
_____.

10—What is the most interesting thing you learned about the Sacrament of Baptism?

“Those who die for the faith, those who are catechumens, and all those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to fulfill his will, are saved even if they have not been baptized”-CCC 1281

The Church teaches the possibility of two “baptisms” besides the typical sacrament of water baptism. These are known as the “baptism of desire” and the “baptism of blood”.

God gives every person sufficient grace to find their way to salvation. He has written Himself on every heart, and in our human nature we can know how to love and serve God even if we haven’t been explicitly been taught (Romans 2:14-15).

“Every man who is ignorant of the gospel of Christ and of his Church but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity” -CCC 1260

In addition to this, a baptism of blood is gained by those who die for their faith in Jesus Christ without having received a water baptism. This martyrdom (martyr means “witness” in Greek), is the highest substitute for sacramental baptism.

“The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This Baptism of blood, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.”-CCC 1258

Baptism is the beginning of the Christian life and of our salvation, and God desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of God (1 Timothy 2:4). By sharing the love of God and inviting the world to be baptized, we are helping to carry out the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:19).

Read this:

Please read the following (in this order):

John 3:5
CCC 1213

2 Corinthians 5:17
Colossians 2:12
CCC 1214-1216
Titus 3:4-7
CCC 1217-1228
Acts 2:32-41
CCC 1246-1256
Acts 16:13-15
CCC 1257-1261
Acts 22:16
Mark 16:16
CCC 1262-1274
Hebrews 10:22
Romans 6 (The whole chapter)
CCC 1275-1284
John 3:3

Done? Good. That was a lot of reading, but hopefully now you have both a broader and deeper understanding of the sacrament of Baptism in your life, the life of the Church, and in the economy of salvation. I encourage you to go back and pray over the Scripture verses whenever you have some free time. You could spend a lifetime chewing on just a single verse (metaphorically of course, please don’t eat your Bibles!) Take ten or fifteen minutes and just pray over the Word of God. God has given you His very life in baptism; take some time to reflect on His word about it!

