

# BAPTISM

IN THE

## CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

- The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life (CCC 1210).
- The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life (CCC 1212).
- Baptism is the basis of all Christian life, the gateway, the door which gives access to the other sacraments (CCC 1213).
- To baptize (Greek *baptizein*) symbolizes burial into Christ's death, from which we rise up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature" (CCC 1214).
- Jesus Christ begins his public life after having himself been baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan. After his resurrection Christ gives this mission to his apostles: **"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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."** (CCC 1223).
- According to the Apostle Paul, the believer enters through Baptism into communion with Christ's death, is buried with him, and rises with him (CCC 1227); inserted/grafted into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

- From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a JOURNEY and initiation in several stages. Certain essential elements are always present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion (CCC 1229).
- Where infant Baptism has become the form in which the sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a post-baptismal catechumenate. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth (CCC 1231).
- The meaning and grace of the sacrament of Baptism are clearly seen in the rites of its celebration. By following the gestures and words of this celebration with attentive participation, the faithful are initiated into the riches this sacrament signifies and actually brings about in each newly baptized person (CCC 1234).
- The **NAMING** of the child reflects the right of the parent to name the child and thereby give the child a Christian identity. (*cf. Rite of Baptism rubrics*)
- Faith needs a community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. The (catechumen or) godparent is asked: "**WHAT DO YOU ASK OF GOD'S CHURCH?**" **The response is: "BAPTISM !"** ... or "**FAITH !**", "the grace of Christ," "entrance into the Church,"

**"ETERNAL LIFE !"** (CCC 1253, also *cf. Rite of Baptism*)

- The **SIGN OF THE CROSS**, on the threshold of the celebration, marks with the imprint of Christ, the one who is going to belong to him... (CCC 1235).
- The **PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD OF GOD** enlightens..., and elicits the response of faith (CCC 1236).
- **EXORCISMS** are pronounced, signifying liberation from sin and from its instigator the devil. The celebrant then **ANOINTS** with the oil of catechumens (CCC 1237).
- The **BAPTISMAL WATER** is consecrated. The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be "born of water and the Spirit." (CCC 1238)
- The **ANOINTING WITH SACRED CHRISM**, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king (CCC 1241).
- The post-baptismal anointing announces a second anointing with sacred chrism to be conferred later by the bishop --- Confirmation, which will as it were "confirm" and complete the baptismal anointing (CCC 1242).

- The **WHITE GARMENT** symbolizes that the person baptized has "put on Christ," has risen with Christ (CCC 1243).
- The **CANDLE**, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are "the light of the world." (CCC 1243)
- The **SOLEMN BLESSING** concludes the celebration of Baptism. At the Baptism of newborns the blessing of the mother occupies a special place (CCC 1245).
- Faith must grow *after* Baptism. For this reason the church celebrates each year at the Easter Vigil the renewal of baptismal promises. Preparation for Baptism leads only to the threshold of new life. Baptism is the source of that new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth. (CCC 1254)
- The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude. (CCC 1257)
- Baptism removes Original Sin. Yet certain temporal consequences, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weakness of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls "concupiscence" ...; since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ..." (CCC 1264)
- By Baptism we share in the priesthood of Christ... *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.* (CCC 1268)

- Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church. (CCC 1269)
- Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated. (CCC 1272)
- Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity. (CCC 1273)
- Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life. (CCC 1274)
- **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION** is received when the child has attained the age of reason (CCC 1244), calling God "Father" in the midst of the Church.