

## **Some Notes on the Theology of Baptism**

*Cross-referenced to the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

### **What are the parts of Baptism?**

*The matter:* Pure and natural water.

*The form:* “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

*The minister:*

**In ordinary circumstances:** A priest or deacon.

**In case of necessity:** Anyone who intends to do what the Church does.

*The recipient:* Anyone not yet baptized.

### **The Institution of Baptism:**

Christ personally instituted the sacrament of Baptism while on earth (CCC, 1257).

“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” (Mt 28:19-20).

The apostles and the early Church observed the command to baptize.

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

### **The Effects of Baptism:**

Baptism remits original sin (CCC, 1263).

Baptism remits all sins that the person has committed (CCC, 1263).

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38); “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16).

Baptism remits all temporal punishment due to sin (CCC, 1263).

Baptism infuses sanctifying grace, making the one baptized holy, a child of God, and an heir to everlasting life (CCC, 1265).

Along with sanctifying grace, Baptism infuses the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love as well as the gifts of the Holy Spirit (CCC, 1266).

Baptism imprints a *character*, a permanent spiritual mark that can never be lost (CCC, 1272).

Because of the character it imprints, Baptism can never be repeated (CCC, 1272).

Baptism makes the recipient a member of the Church.

Baptism makes the recipient capable of receiving other sacraments.

### **The Necessity of Baptism:**

Baptism (or the desire to receive Baptism) is necessary for salvation (CCC, 1257).

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

“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).

“As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,' allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism” (CCC, 1261).

## **Some Figures of Baptism:**

**The Spirit over the Waters:** “And the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters” (Gen 1:2).

**Noah's Ark:** (Gen 7-8); “When God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 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 Pet 3:20-21).

**The Crossing of the Red Sea:** (Ex 14:21-31); “I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor 10:1-2).

**Ezekiel's Prophecy:** “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you” (Ez 36:25).

**The Water from the Side of Christ:** “But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (Jn 19:34).

**In case of an emergency, anyone can baptize by pouring water over the head of the person to be baptized while saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”**