



BAPTISM



"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 (NABRE)

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments (CCC, 1213).

1. The Sacrament of Baptism is the first of the three Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—that lay the foundation of every Christian life. *“The sharing in the divine nature given to man through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin—birth/Baptism, development—strengthening/Confirmation, and nourishing—food/Eucharist, of natural life.”* By these sacraments of Christian initiation, the faithful receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity (CCC, 1212).
2. Through the sacraments of initiation, the faithful receive unique graces that unite them with God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. These sacraments fully incorporate one into the Body of Christ, the Church. This incorporation involves a transformative encounter with the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies the baptized and enables them to participate in the divine life.
3. Baptism frees us from the effects of Original Sin, inherited through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and rebirths us as children of God through water and the Spirit.
4. Baptism is birth into the new life of Christ. According to the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism (CCC, 1277). This necessity underscores the universal call to holiness and communion with God through Jesus Christ.
5. All four Gospels recount John the Baptist’s mission as the forerunner of Christ, announcing the coming of the Messiah. When asked if he were the Christ, John replied, *“I am not the Messiah... I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (John 1:20-23; Mt. 3:11).
6. When Jesus approached John to be baptized, John hesitated, saying, *“I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me.”* Jesus responded, *“Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”* (Mt. 3:14-15).
7. Jesus submitted to John’s baptism not because He needed forgiveness but to show solidarity with humanity and to provide an example of obedience to God’s will. Through His baptism, Jesus revealed the significance of dying to self and rising to new life in God’s grace.
8. In His dialogue with Nicodemus, Jesus emphasized the necessity of baptism for salvation: *“No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of Spirit is spirit”* (John 3:5-6). Baptism seals the soul with a permanent spiritual mark, identifying the baptized as belonging to Christ. Because of this mark, baptism cannot be repeated.
9. After His Resurrection, Jesus commanded His disciples, *“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”* (Mt. 28:19). This command affirms the Trinitarian nature of Baptism and its role in uniting believers with God.
10. Baptism may be conferred upon anyone who accepts the Church’s teachings, desires to follow Christ, and seeks membership in the Catholic faith community. Baptisms

performed in other Christian denominations are recognized if done with water and the Trinitarian formula. If there is doubt about validity, the Sacrament is administered conditionally.

11. The Church urges parents to baptize infants, ensuring they are welcomed into the Church and receive the grace of salvation. Parents and godparents bear the responsibility of raising the child in the faith, teaching them to live as disciples of Christ.
12. Infant Baptism has been practiced since the apostolic era. Scriptural accounts of household baptisms suggest this practice (Acts 16:15, 33; 1 Cor. 1:16). The Church entrusts children who die without Baptism to God's mercy (CCC, 1261).
13. Baptism may be postponed if there is no reasonable hope that the child will be raised in the faith (Code of Canon Law, 868).
14. Those who die desiring Baptism or seeking God's truth are saved by Baptism of Desire (CCC, 1259). Those who die for Christ before Baptism receive Baptism of Blood (CCC, 1258).
15. The ordinary ministers of Baptism are bishops, priests, or deacons. In emergencies, anyone with proper intention may baptize using water and the Trinitarian formula (CCC, 1256).
16. Baptism cleanses us from sin, incorporates us into Christ, and calls us to holiness. St. Paul exhorts us to live by the light of Christ: *"Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience... And above all these, put on love, that is, the bond of perfection"* (Col. 3:12-14).
17. While Baptism removes sin and imparts sanctifying grace, the inclination to sin remains. This reality reminds us of our need for God's ongoing grace to overcome temptation and grow in virtue (CCC, 1264).

Key Points:

- Baptism initiates us into new life in Christ, necessary for salvation and entrance into the Church.
- It cleanses from all sin, grants divine adoption, and makes the baptized a temple of the Holy Spirit and a sharer in Christ's mission.
- The Sacrament leaves an indelible spiritual mark, forever identifying the baptized as belonging to Christ.