

The Sacrament of Baptism

"And there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said to Him: Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him. Jesus answered, and said to him: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again, He cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith to Him: How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born again? Jesus answered: Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:1-5)

1. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the Sacrament which makes you a Christian and a member of the Catholic Church and gives you the right to receive the other Sacraments.

2. What does Baptism do to your soul?

i. It takes away all sin: Original Sin, plus mortal and venial sins.

"Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." (Acts 2:38)

ii. It puts **Sanctifying grace** into your soul for the first time.

iii. It brings the **Holy Ghost** to dwell in your soul.

iv. It makes you a member of the **Catholic Church**.

v. It enables you to receive the other **Sacraments**.

3. Why do you have to be baptized?

Because Jesus Christ said:

"Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

4. How is Baptism given?

It is given by pouring water over the forehead of the person to be baptized and, while pouring the water, saying, *"I baptize thee in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matthew 28:19), while having at least the minimum intention to do what the Church wants you to do by performing this sacramental act.

Signs and Symbols Used in Baptism

There are five universal symbols of baptism: the cross, a white garment, oil, water, and light. In order to understand these symbols, a basic understanding of the philosophies and stories involved in the Christian Religion can clear up a lot of questions. Baptism is one of the sacraments of the church, and babies being baptized are welcomed as members of the Christian community. It is part of the Christian faith that once a baby has been baptized, heaven is open to him or her.

Cross

The cross is a universal symbol of Christianity. You will find this symbol in many Christian rituals, as well as all over the interior of Christian churches. The cross is a symbol coming from Jesus' crucifixion on the cross. Jesus' death was his sacrifice to clear the sins of all mankind, not just his own sins. The cross is one of the most familiar of all Christian symbols.

White Clothing

White is the color of purity, and wearing a white garment during baptism symbolizes that the person being baptized now has a clean slate in the eyes of God. Being born is considered the original sin, and a baby being baptized is cleared of the original sin of being born. The white garment gives the person being baptized the signal that he or she will start a clean life in the eyes of God, and in the church.

Oil

Oil is the baptism symbol of the Holy Spirit. Of course, oil also symbolizes the Holy Spirit during other sacraments and religious gatherings. During a baptism, the baby is anointed with oil, as is mentioned several times in the Bible as a symbol of bringing the person and the Holy Spirit together. Oil is thought to bring strength to the person with whom it is anointed.

Water

Water is the Christian symbol of life, as well as a sign of purity and cleansing. While a white garment symbolizes the purity of the person wearing it, the purifying or cleansing quality of water is considered to be something that can purify a person from the outside. Water is the baptism symbol that signifies that life is given to man by God.

Light

Light is the fifth and final baptism symbol and is generated by the passing of a lighted candle. Light, like water, is essential to the survival of life because without the light of the sun, nothing would exist on earth. In addition to being a baptism symbol of the genesis and vitality of life, light is a symbol of Christian faith. When candles are burning, one knows that religious faith is present.