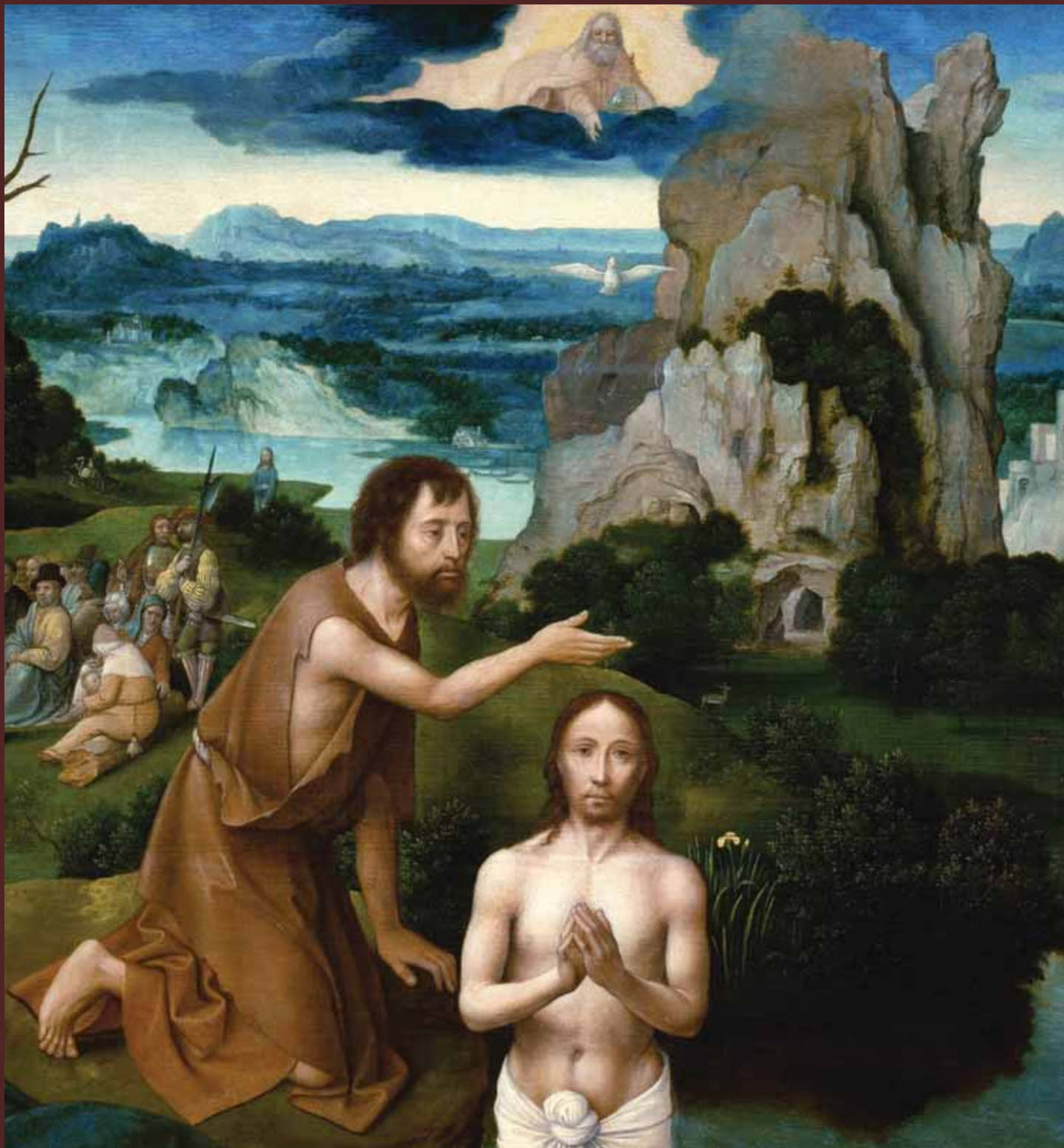


Do you not know that all of us who
have been baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into His death? We were
buried therefore with him by Baptism
into death, so that as Christ was raised
from the dead by the glory of the
Father, we too might walk in newness
of life.

Romans 6:3-4





God intended to bless us with His life and have us participate in it for all eternity. He gives us this new, divine life through Holy Baptism.

Divine Perspective

God intended to bless us with His life and have us participate in it for all eternity. He gives us this new, divine life through Holy Baptism.

TRINITY

Baptism makes us “new creatures,” capable of sharing the life of the Blessed Trinity. By it, we are made children of the Father, in His only Son, and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts.

CHURCH

Christ entrusted Baptism to the Church. Through it, we become members of her family, and it is her faith that we profess for our salvation.



PASCHAL MYSTERY

United to Christ through Baptism, we die and rise with Him. From the moment we receive this Sacrament onward, we possess the life of the Resurrection, here and now.

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

“Acknowledge, O Christian, your dignity...” Baptism renews us so that we can now live the glory God intended for us in creating us. There is no greater dignity than to be chosen by God to live supernaturally in Him. Every act of ours must reflect this dignity of divine sonship.

Theological Virtues (AIMS OF INSTRUCTION)



**SEEING
WITH FAITH**

Understanding the significance of the Father’s plan for us and how, through the Church and Baptism, He makes “every spiritual blessing” available to us, we are inclined to pray for greater strength in believing the truth, trusting God, and loving God and our neighbor.



**ABIDING
WITH HOPE**

Baptism is the source of the theological virtues—it gives us the capacity for supernatural life with God: to believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him and all others for His sake.



**BURNING
WITH CHARITY**

The Church instructs her children by the signs of each Sacrament, teaching them the faith to be believed, the beatitude to be hoped for, and the charity to be practiced. These spring from the Mystery of Christ’s life into which the Sacrament immerses the believer.

The Church instructs her children by the signs of each Sacrament, teaching them the faith to be believed, the beatitude to be hoped for, and the charity to practice. These spring from the Mystery of Christ’s life into which the Sacrament immerses the believer.

Our **faith** is strengthened when we see that by this Sacrament God works our death to sin and our regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Hope increases when we see that in this Sacrament we have died with Christ. “If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Him” (Rom 6:8).

Baptism enflames **Charity** when we grasp that through this Sacrament, we now have the obligation and power to walk in the newness of life.

This sacrament commemorates the **Death and Resurrection of Jesus** and the Old Testament types of Baptism, especially the Flood, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land. We die and rise with Christ in Baptism, are set free from slavery to sin, and enter into our promised inheritance.

Scripture and Essentials

1) IN BAPTISM, WITH CHRIST, THE FATHER SAYS OF US, “THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASSED.”



- ✘ **Mt 3:11, 13-17** - Christ is baptized for our sake.
- ✘ **Col 2:12** - You were buried with Christ in Baptism to rise to newness of life.

- ✘ **Gal 4:4-6** - God sent His Son to make us adopted sons. He sends the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father.”

CCC 536-537, 1214, 1224-1225, 1265

Scripture for further study

- Jesus emptied Himself by being baptized by John, a baptism intended for sinners. By uniting Himself to us in this way, He made Baptism the means for us to share His divinity.
 - ✘ *Mt 3:11, 13-15 - Christ is baptized for our sake.*
 - ✘ *Phil. 2:7 - Jesus emptied Himself, taking human form.*
 - ✘ *Jn 1:12 - 13 - Jesus gave the right to become children of God to those who believed in Him.*
- At our Baptism, the Holy Spirit descends upon us and catches us up into the divine life, making us the beloved adopted children of God.
 - We are radically changed at the core of our very being: we now have supernatural life.
 - Divine adoption supernaturalizes our whole existence forever and gives us the abilities we need to live divinely, in union with Christ.
 - Baptism can only be given once, because God never revokes this adoption. It marks the soul forever with a spiritual seal.
 - ✘ *Mt 3:16-17 - The Holy Spirit descends on Christ.*
 - ✘ *Eph 1:4-8 - God chose us and destined us to be His adopted sons.*
 - ✘ *Gal 4:4-6 - God sent His Son to make us adopted sons. He sends the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father.”*
- Baptism immerses us in the Paschal Mystery—in it, we die and rise with Christ.
 - Christ spoke of His Passion as a Baptism which he must undergo.
 - The water flowing from Christ’s side on the Cross is the source of Baptism, the graces of which flow from His Passion and Resurrection.
 - As liturgy, Baptism makes present Christ’s saving work in the Paschal Mystery: In Baptism, we pass from spiritual death to divine life with Christ. We die and rise with Him as we go down into the waters.
 - ✘ *Col 2:12 - You were buried with Christ in Baptism to rise to newness of life.*
 - ✘ *Lk 12:49-50 - Christ speaks of His Passion as a baptism.*
 - ✘ *Jn 19:34 - Water flows from Christ’s pierced side.*
 - ✘ *Mk 10:38 - Jesus asks His disciples if they are capable of enduring the baptism of his Passion.*

2) GOD MAKES US A NEW CREATION THROUGH THE WATERS OF BAPTISM.



✘ **Ezek 36:25-28** - I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you, and I will give you a new heart.

✘ **2 Cor 5:17** - Anyone in Christ is a new creation.

✘ **Rom 6:3-4** - We are baptized into Christ's death and raised to newness of life in Him.

✘ **1 Cor 6:11** - Baptism washes away sin, sanctifies, and justifies.

CCC 977, 978, 1221, 1239-1241, 1243, 1262, 1263, 1265, 1267, 1269

— *Scripture for further study* —

- Baptism washes away all sin, both original and personal. We rise up from the waters as “new creatures,” through the mercy of God.
 - Christ restores what Adam lost by sin.
 - We cannot merit this gift. God gives it because of His mercy.
 - By giving us sanctifying grace, Baptism makes us participate in God's own nature by divine adoption.
 - Baptism incorporates us into the Church, Christ's body. It is this sacred link that binds us to one another.
 - The meaning and grace of the sacrament of Baptism are clearly seen in the rite.
 - The Sign of the Cross claims the one to be baptized for Christ.
 - The Proclamation of the Word leads to a response of faith from the assembly; Baptism is “the Sacrament of faith.”
 - Exorcisms emphasize that Baptism frees us from sin and the devil.
 - The Blessing of the Waters asks the Holy Spirit to make of it a source of new life.
 - The act of Baptism itself immerses the one baptized into communion with the Blessed Trinity, imitates Christ's Death and Resurrection, and washes away sin.
 - The anointing after Baptism signifies that the Christian, incorporated into Christ, “the Anointed One,” is priest, prophet, and king with Him, and has received His Holy Spirit.
 - The white garment given to the baptized symbolizes that he or she has “put on Christ,” and must live in holiness.
- ✘ *Acts 22:16* - Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins.
- ✘ *Titus 2:14* - Christ gave Himself to purify us.
- ✘ *Titus 3:5* - Christ saved us in virtue of His mercy, not because of anything we did.
- ✘ *Rom 6:3-11* - We are baptized into Christ's death and raised to newness of life in Him.
- ✘ *Eph 5:25-27* - Christ gave Himself up for the Church to purify her by washing, that she might be holy.
- ✘ *Eph 4:25* - Speak truth to one another, for we are all members of one another.
- ✘ *1 Cor 6:11* - You were washed, sanctified, and justified.
- ✘ *Rom 13:14, Gal 3:26-27* - In Baptism, we put on Christ.

- The candle, lit from the Easter candle, shows that, illumined by this Sacrament, the baptized is called to be “the light of the world.”

3) CHRIST HAS MADE BAPTISM THE MEANS OF OUR SALVATION.



✘ **Mt 28:18-19** - Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...

✘ **Mk 16:16** - He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

✘ **Acts 2:38, 41** - The first proclamation of the Gospel by the Apostles includes Baptism as the essential response.

CCC 1223, 1226, 1247, 1250, 1256, 1257

Scripture for further study

- Christ extends the Incarnation by continuing to use sensible signs to bring us into contact with God. This is why He commanded His Apostles to baptize with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
 - ✘ *Mt 28:18-19 - Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them....*
 - ✘ *Jn 4:2 - Jesus Himself did not baptize; only His disciples did.*
 - ✘ *1 Tim 4:10 - We strive to this end: God is the savior of all, especially those who believe.*
- He entrusted Baptism to the Church as the means of bringing the graces He won by His Paschal Mystery to all men.
 - Baptism is the only sure means of salvation that has been given to men.
 - Baptism is necessary for the salvation of all who have heard the Gospel and have had the possibility of asking for the sacrament.
 - ◆ Those who die desiring and preparing to receive Baptism still receive the fruits of the sacrament and salvation.
 - ◆ The Church entrusts those who die without Baptism to the mercy of God. We are bound to Baptism, but God is not.
 - Because it is so necessary, God designed the Sacrament of Baptism to be such that in an emergency, anyone can baptize.
- Baptism requires a response of faith.
 - The Baptism of the believing adult is a model for the normal process of growth in faith: catechesis leads them to profess faith personally through the baptismal promises, and then they receive the Sacrament.
 - In the Baptism of infants, the parents and godparents profess the Faith and pledge to raise the child in that Faith. This has been the Church’s practice since apostolic times.
 - ✘ *Acts 16:31, 33 - Belief and Baptism lead to an entire family’s salvation.*



4) BAPTISM REQUIRES A JOURNEY OF FAITH.



✘ **Jn 4:1-30** - Jesus gradually awakens faith in the Samaritan woman, so that she begins to believe and then to bring others to Him.

✘ **Eph 4:15-16** - Through the ministry of Apostles and teachers, we mature into the fullness of Christ.

CCC 197, 1229, 1231, 1245, 1253-1255

— Scripture for further study —

- For the adult, it
 - begins with the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the heart,
 - leads to seeking, and examination and catechesis by the Church, and
 - reaches completion in profession of faith, reception of the Sacraments, and a life of ever-deepening communion with God.
 - For infants, the journey begins with Baptism.
 - The child grows in faith, taught and accompanied by parents, godparents, and teachers who walk with them, as catechists, witnesses, counselors, and intercessors.
 - In both cases, instruction and care prepare the way for life in Christ by making clear the demands of this new life.
 - The “standard of teaching” of the Apostles is the process of teaching and spiritual care which the Apostles used to prepare people for Baptism.
 - Catechesis after Baptism helps to unfold the graces of the Sacrament, deepening the Christian’s walk in faith, hope, and love.
- ✘ *Jn 4:1-30 - Jesus gradually awakens faith in the Samaritan woman, so that she begins to believe and then to bring others to Him.*
- ✘ *2 Tim 1:4, 13-14 - I am reminded of the faith that first dwelt in your grandmother and mother, and now dwells in you. Keep the faith, as I taught it to you.*
- ✘ *Eph 4:15-16 - Through the ministry of Apostles and teachers, we mature into the fullness of Christ.*
- ✘ *Rom 6:17 - Those once slaves to sin have become obedient to the standard of the Apostles’ teaching.*
- ✘ *Jude 1:20-23 - Build yourselves up in the holy faith.*
- ✘ *1 Tim 4:15 - Devote yourself to these duties, so that all may see your progress.*

5)

BAPTISM IS THE GATEWAY TO LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.



✘ **Jn 3:3-9** - Only one born of water and the Spirit can enter the kingdom of God.

✘ **Rom 6:1-3, 5-11** - We are called to die to sin and rise to new life in Christ.

✘ **2 Pet 1:3-11** - Through God's power, we become partakers in the divine nature.

✘ **1 Pet 2:5, 9** - We are a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim His wonderful works.

CCC 782, 786, 897, 901, 905, 908, 1212-1213, 1264-1266, 1268, 1273

— *Scripture for further study* —

- New birth in the Holy Spirit means that the one baptized has been radically changed. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us, bringing with Him all the gifts we need to live as children of God:
 - The theological virtues give us the ability to relate to God as His children (not just His creation), to believe in God, hope in Him, and love Him supernaturally. The infused moral virtues divinize our everyday, human acts so that they share in our life of sanctifying grace. By these acts we grow in God's likeness and in the divine life.
 - The gifts of the Holy Spirit make us capable of acting in a divine way (as God does), under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
 - Baptism is our birth into the supernatural life. It opens the door to the other Sacraments, which deepen and strengthen this life.
 - Its work is brought to fullness in Confirmation and continues in the Eucharist.
 - All the other Sacraments depend on Baptism. We must have this life in us for it to be deepened, fed, or healed in the other Sacraments.
 - We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in order for this new life to flourish and bear fruit.
- ✘ **2 Cor 5:17** - *Anyone in Christ is a new creation.*
- ✘ **1 Cor 6:19** - *Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.*
- ✘ **2 Pet 1:3-4** - *God has granted us all things needed to be partakers of the divine nature.*
- ✘ **1 Thess 5:8** - *Put on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation.*
- ✘ **Lk 3:21-22** - *The Holy Spirit descends on Christ as He prayed, after His baptism.*
- ✘ **Jn 1:33** - *Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit.*
- ✘ **Jn 3:3-9** - *Only one born of water and the Spirit can enter the kingdom of God.*
- ✘ **Eph 4:22-23** - *Put on the new nature in the likeness of God.*
- ✘ **Rom 6:1-3, 5-11** - *We are called to die to sin and rise to new life in Christ.*
- ✘ **Eph 4:30** - *Do not grieve the Holy Spirit, in whom you were sealed.*

- God calls each of His children to embrace these gifts of the Holy Spirit and to live every moment in faith, hope, and charity. This is the universal call to holiness.
 - ✦ *1 Pet 1:14-15 - Live as obedient children; be holy as He is holy.*
 - ✦ *2 Pet 1:5-11 - When we realize and remember that we have been cleansed from sin to live divinely, we practice virtue.*
- After Baptism, we are still inclined to sin. Purification requires continual conversion. It is a process that
 - ◆ begins with recognition of sin,
 - ◆ leads to hatred of it in the light of God's love,
 - ◆ progresses to asking God's mercy and forgiveness, and
 - ◆ reaches fullness in deciding to sin no more and live the divine life, while doing penance for sin.
- Since, after Baptism, sin is still possible, God mercifully gives us the Sacrament of Reconciliation to restore the divine life of grace which is lost or damaged through sin.
 - ✦ *Jas 4:8 - Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts.*
 - ✦ *Jn 3:20-21 - He who does what is evil hates the light.*
 - ✦ *Col 3:5-10 - Put to death whatever is earthly in you.*
 - ✦ *Titus 2:14 - Christ gave Himself for us to purify us.*
- The anointing of the Holy Spirit in Baptism gives us a share in the threefold mission of Christ as priest, prophet, and king.
 - Baptism consecrates us to offer spiritual sacrifices in Christ. It gives us the ability to participate officially in the liturgy by giving us a share in Christ's priesthood.
 - Baptism anoints us with the Spirit so that we are called to participate in Christ's mission as prophet, bearing witness to the Gospel.
 - With Christ, in Baptism, we are crowned as king. It gives us the royal dignity of our particular vocation, which is the way in which we are called to serve in the kingdom of God.
 - ✦ *1 Pet 2:5, 9 - We are a royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim His wonderful works.*



Related Doctrines

1. Baptism is primary to all precepts of the **Faith**.
2. It is the gateway to the whole journey of divine life for the faithful in this life—it gives the power to live **the moral life**, to receive **the Sacraments**, and to **pray** as a child of God.
3. Because of Baptism we can know and act in accord with **God's plan**.

Common Errors

1. *“Baptism is enough. There is no need for more ritual or ceremonies in our relationship with God.”* God continues to work in the same way—incarnationally— throughout our lives. Baptism is spiritual birth, but in order to reach the fullness of the life of grace, we need the other Sacraments' liturgies: to be nourishment (Eucharist), to mature (Confirmation), to heal (Confession and Anointing of the Sick), and to enter into a new state in the Church (Matrimony and Holy Orders).
2. *“Baptism is chiefly a matter of washing away original sin.”* Saying that Baptism is primarily about washing away sin is like saying that building a house is primarily about getting out of the rain—it fails to take into account that Baptism is also the cause of our regeneration, our new life in Christ. We are washed from sin to be prepared for life with God.
3. *“Baptism is merely an outward sign of an inner conversion and makes no actual difference in the one baptized.”* While Baptism requires faith; faith is incomplete without Baptism. Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3:5). As bodily and spiritual beings, we need to be sanctified both in body and in spirit. Through the waters of Baptism, God acts on our spirits through our body, in accord with our human nature.
4. *“Baptism should only be administered to believing adults or children old enough to understand.”* A profession of faith is necessary for Baptism. In the case of an infant, parents and godparents make an act of faith on behalf of the child, promising to raise that child in the faith. The child then has the tremendous privilege of being raised in the Faith of the Church. The child also has the benefit of sanctifying grace from the earliest days of his life and has received the capacity for life with God in heaven. He or she is now divine! These precious gifts are why the Church exhorts parents to present their child for Baptism as soon as possible after the child's birth. This is why the early Church baptized infants.
5. *“Baptism can be administered more than once. Baptism is part of a process to join a particular denomination and should be repeated if one ‘falls away’ or joins a different denomination.”* Baptism gives a spiritual seal that radically marks the baptized forever as belonging to Christ. Even if the Faith is later renounced, the Christian, like the Prodigal Son, never ceases to be what Baptism made him—a child of the heavenly Father. Due to this, Baptism cannot be repeated.

Liturgical Sources

See appendix

Teaching through Beauty

HYMN: "Breathe On Me, Holy One" by Jim Cowan (1986)

Draw me to the Living Waters,
 Cleanse me in that crystal stream.
 Wash me in the Waters of Life.
 Seal me with the Spirit of Christ my Lord.

Text: Jim Cowan, b. 1952
 © 1986, International Liturgy Publications

Breathe on me, Breath of God.
 Rest on me, Heavenly Dove.
 Breathe on me, Holy One;
 Come, Holy Spirit, come.

ARTWORK: *The Baptism of Christ* by Joachim Patinir (c. 1510-1520)

In lush blues and greens, Patinir depicts the moment of Christ's "coming up from the waters," when the heavens are opened, the Spirit descends, and the Father reveals Jesus as His own beloved Son. Christ has stripped Himself of His divinely blue garment, symbolizing His self-emptying to sanctify the waters of Baptism for us.

The artist places a scene of John the Baptist preaching to the crowds, while Jesus draws near, listening, still clad in the blue garment symbolizing His divinity. Beneath the rocky figure, the cave at the base of which might be intended to call to mind Christ's forty-day fast after His Baptism, deer quench their thirst from the flowing streams of the Jordan. "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God" (Ps

42:1). Ancient myth held that the deer could purge itself of the poison of a serpent's bite by drinking from flowing streams. Inspired by the Psalm, the early Church united the two elements in her liturgical symbolism. They decorated their baptistries with the image of the deer longing for streams. By bringing together these scenes, Patinir reminds us that Christ is the only Beloved Son of the Father—to Whom we must listen—but also that He has made Baptism an antidote to the poison of sin and the means by which God bestows on us the grace of adoption. Christ clothes us in that garment of the divine nature that He laid aside in His Baptism. He makes us a new creation and catches us up into the heart of the Trinity.

ARTWORK: *Baptism* by Nicolas Poussin (c. 1630).

In his series of the Seven Sacraments, Poussin unites the appropriate mystery of Christ's life to the practice of the apostolic Church to show the Sacrament as coming from Christ. In his painting, the preacher is clearly not

John the Baptist—who is always shown in a garment of camel hair. The figure seems to be Christ, calling all to humble themselves with Him in the waters.



Patinir's Baptism



Poussin's Baptism