



LESSON SIXTEEN

The Sacrament of Baptism: Christ Welcomes Us

Opening Prayer

*O God by invisible power you accomplish
a wondrous effect through sacramental signs.*

*In many ways you have prepared water, your creation,
to show forth the grace of Baptism. ...*

*May this water be a fountain of new birth,
cleansing from all stain of sin
and giving life to soul and body.*

Amen.



Lesson Objectives:

- ❖ Understand the significance of Baptism as the foundational sacrament of Christian life, instituted by Christ and essential to the journey of faith.
- ❖ Identify and explain the spiritual effects of Baptism, including the forgiveness of Original Sin and personal sin, the gift of sanctifying grace, adoption as children of God, and incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church.
- ❖ Articulate the Church's teaching on the necessity of Baptism for salvation and explore the scriptural foundations; understand baptism of desire and baptism of blood, along with the Church's hope for the salvation of those who die without Baptism.

BURNING QUESTIONS

- ❖ If we are saved by Jesus, why do we need Baptism? Can someone be saved without it?
Can Jesus save us without Baptism? If so, why does he want everyone to be baptized? What is the relationship between faith and the sacrament?
- ❖ Why does the Church baptize infants, who can't choose it for themselves? Isn't faith supposed to be personal?
In the Gospels, people receive grace through the faith of others. How do faith, family, and community intersect? What are your thoughts on receiving Baptism as an infant versus choosing it as an adult?

Saints Perpetua and Felicity

Feast Day: March 7

Lived: c. 182–c. 203 · Possibly Carthage, North Africa · Patron of Widows, Mothers of deceased sons, Butchers

In early third-century Carthage, two young mothers, Perpetua, a noblewoman, and Felicity, her servant, were arrested for the simple act of preparing for Baptism. Perpetua was twenty-two and nursing her infant son, Felicity was eight months pregnant. Their preparation for the sacrament made them criminals under Roman law. Both were baptized in prison, and both went to the arena willingly, guiding the soldier's blade to Perpetua's throat rather than deny Christ. They are commemorated to this day in the ancient Roman Canon.



“I cannot be called anything other than what I am, a Christian.”

St. Perpetua

Baptism: New Life

Called by Name

At Baptism, we are each given a new title, called by God in a new way. We are called “son” or “daughter.” God is truly our Father; we belong to him as his family. In Baptism, we become God’s children, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38; CCC 1226). Pope Francis calls Baptism “the sacrament which is itself ‘the door,’” for it is the basis of the Christian life and leads to all the other sacraments (see CCC 1213).

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

Jesus had no sin and needed no cleansing, but he consented to be baptized by John in the Jordan to identify himself with sinners and fulfill all righteousness (see CCC 1224; Matthew 3:15). St. Maximus of Turin taught that Christ, by entering the water, consecrated it for all time: “He is the first to be baptized, then, so that Christians will follow after him with confidence.”

“And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him.”

Matthew 3:16

The Fruits of Baptism

Freedom from Sin and New Life

Baptism wipes away Original Sin, forgives all personal sin, and removes all punishment due to sin (see CCC 1263). Sanctifying grace is restored (yet concupiscence remains). The *Catechism* calls the two primary fruits “purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1262). We become a new creation: “if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Indelible Mark

Baptism imprints a sacramental character on the soul—a permanent seal that can never be erased and marks us as belonging to Christ forever (see CCC 1272). This is why Baptism can only be received once. We can lose sanctifying grace through mortal sin, but this mark remains, calling us always back to the Father.

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that ... we too might walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:4



Infant Baptism and Salvation

Infant Baptism

Infant Baptism has been practiced since the earliest centuries of the Church. Just as in the healing of the paralyzed man, where Jesus responded to the faith of the man's friends, not only his own, God can act through the faith of parents and the Church on behalf of the child. Baptism is not something we earn; it is something God gives.

Baptism of Desire and Blood

Jesus bound salvation to Baptism (see John 3:5), but he is God, and can act outside the sacrament (see CCC 1257). Those who sincerely desire Baptism but die before receiving it receive baptism of desire. Those who die as martyrs for Christ before Baptism receive baptism of blood. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16): faith and the sacrament, together, are the ordinary path.

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."

Acts 2:38



Discussion Questions

- ❖ Have you ever struggled to believe that God loves you unconditionally, or felt that you needed to earn his love by being a better person? What would it mean to truly accept your identity as a beloved son or daughter of God?
- ❖ Where do you currently find your sense of worth—in what you do, or in who you are as God’s child? What might need to shift in your heart to accept the truth that you are loved unconditionally?
- ❖ As we hear in the video, “There is peace in knowing who we are.” How does knowing this shape your journey into the Catholic Faith?

Faith and Fun

What is the name of the threefold office of Christ, in which all baptized Christians share?

a. The Great Commission

b. The Trinitarian role

c. The *tria munera*

d. The triple immersion

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a. The Great Commission

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c. The *tria munera* ✓

d. The triple immersion

The *tria munera* (Latin for “threefold office”) refers to the mission and identity of Christ as priest, prophet, and king. Jesus is the high priest, the Word of God, and the eternal King of Heaven. As the *Catechism* explains (see CCC 783–786), the baptized share in Christ’s priesthood by offering themselves to God, in his prophetic office by proclaiming the Faith, and in his kingly office by governing themselves and serving others.

Holy Water and the Baptismal Font

Holy Water as Sacramental

Holy water is a sacramental: an object or gesture, established by the Church, that sanctifies the ordinary circumstances of our lives and helps us receive grace. It is made holy by Christ, who sanctified all water when he stepped into the Jordan River. St. Teresa of Ávila wrote from long experience that “there is nothing like holy water to put devils to flight.” Near every entrance to a Catholic church, small vessels called stoups hold holy water for the faithful.

The Baptismal Font

The baptismal font is the vessel of water in which Baptism is celebrated. In many parishes, the font is placed at the entrance of the church, to signify that Baptism is the door to the Christian life. When we dip our fingers in holy water and make the Sign of the Cross upon entering church, we are reminded that we are sons and daughters of God, made new in Christ, and freed from sin.



Living It Out:

This week, visit a church where holy water is available and collect a small bottle of it. Each day, bless yourself with the holy water and the Sign of the Cross.

Closing Prayer

*Almighty God,
source of all creation,
you have made us in your image.*

*Receive us with love.
Lead those of us who are catechumens to the
baptism of new birth*

*and those of us who are candidates to a deeper
share in the Paschal Mystery
so that, living a fruitful life in the company of
your faithful,
we may receive the eternal reward you promise.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.
Amen.*

Announcements / Reminders — add notes here