

Who is Baptized? Who remembers their Baptism?

Whether we were Baptized as a child or as an adult,  
we all too often forget just what this means.

We who are Baptized are Baptized  
into the Family of God.

That makes us not only adopted children of God,  
but also brothers and sisters in Christ.  
We are family.

And in Baptism, several things happen  
that we need to remember:

Whether we were Baptized  
as a child or as an adult,  
Baptism washed away all our sins.  
This means Original Sin,  
caused by our original parents  
(thanks so much, Adam and Eve);

we are restored to God's Grace;  
we are again open to the Grace  
God so much wants to give us.

The Holy Spirit is able to enter into our lives  
in a full and complete way,  
just like before the Fall.

Also, all personal sins are removed.  
Now, children, of course,  
cannot be guilty of personal sin,  
but those Baptized as adults  
have not only all their personal sins removed  
but also all stain of sin is removed.

Just think about that: We are restored  
to a perfect state of Grace in Baptism.

We are anointed with the Oil of Catechumens,  
preparing us for the life-long journey  
of learning about our faith.

And with the Sacred Chrism,  
we are anointed Priest, Prophet and King.

We receive a white shawl  
reminding us of our purity in new life  
and a lighted candle,  
the Light of Christ.

We remember our Baptism when we sign ourselves,

“In the name of the Father, †  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

We remember our Baptism  
when we enter church  
and dip our fingers  
into the holy water of the font  
and bless ourselves.

We remember our Baptism  
each time we kneel and prepare to pray.  
We remember that  
we are members of God’s family.

Why is Baptism so important?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says,  
“The Church does not know of any means  
other than Baptism that assures entry  
into eternal life,”

and Jesus himself tells us in Mark, Chapter 16,  
that Baptism is necessary for salvation  
and in Matthew 28,  
He commands us to baptize others.

We know that God is all-powerful and all-knowing;  
we also know that God is all-merciful.

Just as God created the universe,  
but is outside the universe,  
the Catechism says,  
“God has bound salvation  
to the sacrament of Baptism,  
but he himself is not bound  
by his sacraments.”

He can choose mercy for those who are not Baptized.

This doesn’t mean we should rely on God’s mercy;  
that is up to Him.  
So, get Baptized,  
if you aren’t already.

A sacrament is a visible symbol of an invisible reality.

The Sacraments effect,  
or bring about,  
what they symbolize.

The Greek word for Baptize  
means to plunge or immerse.

The symbol of water  
represents the plunging into the water – death –

and rising out of the water – resurrection,  
or new life.

We die with Christ  
and we rise to new life in Christ.

We become one with Christ in Baptism  
just as we become one with each other  
as brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ.

Sound familiar?  
It is just like the Eucharist;  
we become what we eat.  
We become Christ  
in the eating and drinking  
of His flesh and blood.  
We become one with each other  
– the family of God.

Paul tells us that,  
“If, then, we have died with Christ,  
we believe that we shall also live with him.”  
His death destroyed sin, once and for all.  
His life is a life in God.

We are called to the same life.

Paul continues,  
“You too must think of yourselves  
as dead to sin  
and living for God in Christ Jesus.”

When Jesus tells us that,  
“Whoever loves father or mother  
more than me is not worthy of me,  
and whoever loves son or daughter  
more than me is not worthy of me,”  
it seems contradictory  
to His command to love one another.

Yet, if we look at the first part, “Love God,”  
we realize this is a ‘first then second’ reality.

It’s like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich  
without the bread.

It’s like The Brady Bunch  
without Mike and Carol.

It can’t happen; it doesn’t make sense.

We must first love God,  
and only when we truly love God  
can we love our neighbor.

Imagine loving neighbor but not loving God.

God is love, and God must come first.

When we focus on loving God,  
loving neighbor becomes second nature.

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son,  
the Son He loved so much,  
and who loved him back,  
that the Holy Spirit emanated from them.

That's how much God loves us.  
And that's how much we are called to love God.

God knew when he created us  
that we would fail,  
and still He created us.

Then He gave us the means  
to come back to Him,  
each of us, our own choice.

He gave us the Sacraments,  
the first of which is Baptism.

Because of Adam, death entered the world.  
Because of God's love, Jesus entered the world  
to make things right again.

Jesus destroyed sin and death by dying  
and restored life by rising.

That's today's message.  
And we are called to join Jesus,  
dying to sin and rising to new life.

We live our Baptism every day  
when we fight off temptation and avoid sin.

This is how we love our neighbor,  
by first loving God.

This is how we live in Christ,  
by dying to sin.