

## *The Sacrament of Baptism*

### **Q. 201. What is the sacrament of Baptism?**

Baptism is the sacrament through which we are: (1) reborn as children of God, (2) united with Jesus into His death and Resurrection, (3) cleansed of original sin and personal sins, and (4) welcomed into the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.

*1. Baptism is the sacrament through which we are reborn as children of God.*

Baptism is directed toward our participation in the fullness of Christ's divine life. By this sacrament we become truly incorporated into Christ and are reborn to a sharing in the divine life. Baptism is our new birth as children of God, a beginning of a new life in us, God's own life of grace brought to us by Jesus Christ.

Christ Himself, through the minister, baptizes us and makes us holy with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and impresses on our souls a character or mark that cannot be taken away.

*2. Baptism is the sacrament through which we are united with Jesus into His death and Resurrection.*

Through Baptism the new Christian is united so closely with Jesus that he shares in Christ's death and Resurrection. Through this sacrament a Christian dies to his old self and rises to new life. St. Paul says, "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).

*3. Baptism is the sacrament through which we are cleansed of original sin and personal sins.*

Through Baptism our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled with God. We receive a sharing in the life of God and become part of God's people. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17).

During the rite of Baptism, the minister immerses the person to be baptized in water or pours water on his head while saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The water is a sign of life and of cleansing. The words used in Baptism signify that the life the person enters is that of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus, so that we may share with Him the life of God He brought into the world.

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*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*



*4. Baptism is the sacrament through which we are welcomed into the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ.*

The Catholic Church has always held that Baptism is necessary to become a member. For believing Christians, the Catholic Church is the only place where we can live out our faith to the fullest. We need to hear the Gospel and to be a part of the continuing work of Jesus in the world. We also need the support of our Christian community as we grow in the Faith.

#### ***Sacred Scripture***

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.  
*Mark 16:16*

To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.  
*John 1:12*

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. *1 Peter 3:21-22*

#### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**1258** The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This *Baptism of blood*, like the *desire for Baptism*, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

**1259** For *catechumens* who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

**1261** As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,"<sup>71</sup> allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.

**1282** Since the earliest times, Baptism has been administered to children, for it is a grace and a gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit; children are baptized in the faith of the Church. Entry into Christian life gives access to true freedom.

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**1992** Justification has been *merited for us by the Passion of Christ* who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life:<sup>1</sup> “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.”<sup>2</sup>

### ***Vatican Council II***

From the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, those are made children of God so that the People of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries. *The Church, 11*

By the sacrament of Baptism, whenever it is properly conferred in the way the Lord determined and received with the proper dispositions of soul, man becomes truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ and is reborn to a sharing of the divine life, as the Apostle says: “For you were buried together with him in baptism, and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead” (cf. Romans 6:4). *Ecumenism, 22*

By Baptism men are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ; they die with him, are buried with him, and rise with him. They receive the spirit of adoption as sons “in which we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15) and thus become true adorers such as the Father seeks. *Sacred Liturgy, 6*

### ***Summary Prayer***

*Lord God, in Baptism we die with Christ to rise again in Him. Strengthen us by Your Spirit to walk in the newness of life as Your adopted children. You have renewed us in Baptism in the likeness of Christ Your Son and have united us to Your priestly people.*

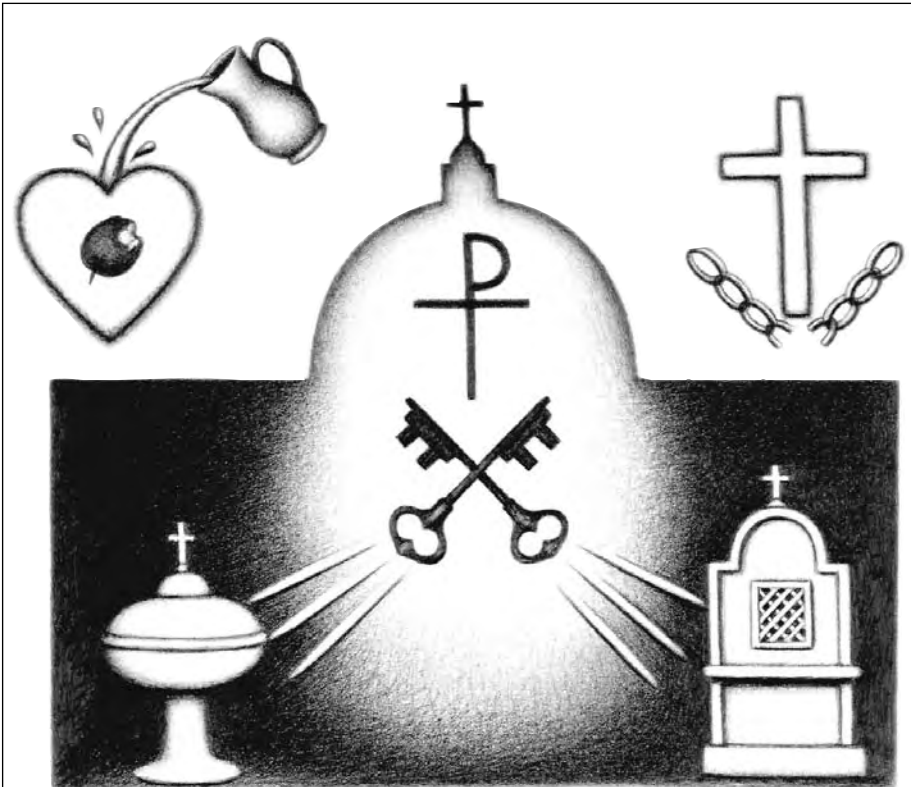
*Accept us through the sacrifice of Your Son offered by Your Church. Keep us one in Christ Jesus the Lord, and may our names be written in the Book of Life, for we are born to new life by water and the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. What are the effects of Baptism?
2. Baptism unites us with Jesus in His death and Resurrection. List specific things that you can do in order to show that you have died to your old self and have risen to new life in Christ.
3. Using the Summary Prayer after question 201, thank God for the graces you have received since you were baptized.

### Catechism by Diagram

#C17-8



**Baptism and Penance.** The Church receives power (keys) from Christ (monogram) to forgive sins in the sacraments of Baptism and Penance. Baptism (water poured) is the sacrament of our rebirth as children of God sanctified by the Spirit. It is also the sacrament which unites us to Jesus in His death and Resurrection (monogram, cross), cleanses our souls of original sin (apple, heart), and welcomes us into the community of the Church (St. Peter's Basilica). The sacrament of Penance (confessional) brings to the Christian God's merciful forgiveness for sins that have been committed since Baptism (baptismal font). Sacramental absolution, which follows upon sincere confession of sin, true sorrow, and the resolution not to sin again, is a means of obtaining pardon (chain of sin broken by Christ) from God.

**Q. 202. What relationship with God is begun at Baptism?**

Baptism (1) permanently relates us to God as His adopted children, and (2) joins us to Christ's priesthood and His prophetic and kingly mission.

*1. Baptism permanently relates us to God as His adopted children.*

This relationship or bond can never be erased. Baptism is directed toward acquiring the fullness of life in Christ, that is, toward a complete profession of faith, a complete incorporation into the system of salvation, and an integration into Eucharistic communion. For those who have reached the age of reason, both faith in Jesus Christ and the desire to follow Him in His Church are necessary for Baptism.



#B6-10

*2. Baptism joins us to Christ's priesthood and His prophetic and kingly mission.*

As the People of God, we share in the kingly and priestly office of Christ because, by regeneration in Baptism and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, we are consecrated into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. Through good works we can offer spiritual sacrifices.

We share in Christ's prophetic office by being living witnesses to Him, by means of a life of faith and charity, and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise. As Christians we should act, by the example of our lives, as the transformed persons we became at Baptism. We are children of God and followers of Jesus Christ.

***Sacred Scripture***

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. *Romans 8:15-17*

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*For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr: John Vianney and Fr: Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.*

For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. *Galatians 3:26-27*

Through him [Christ] then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. *Hebrews 13:15-16*

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

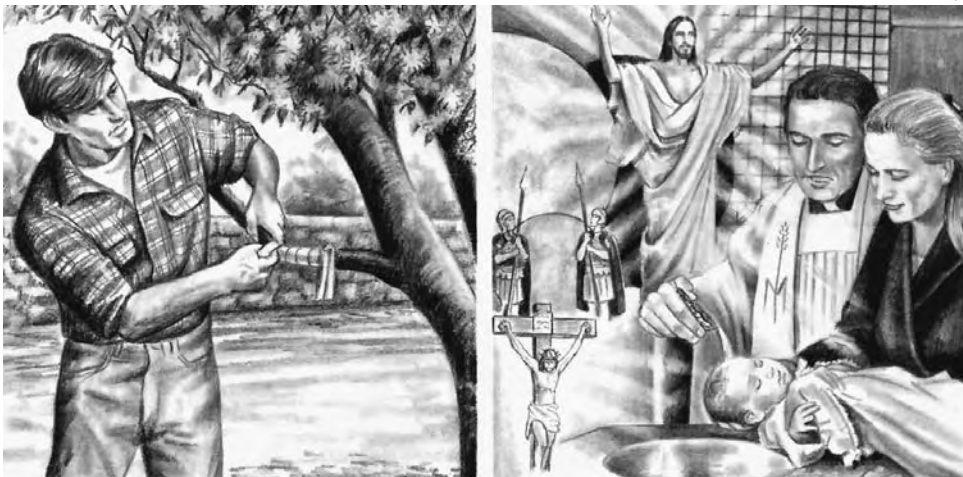
**1256** The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon.<sup>1</sup> In case of necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required intention, can baptize,<sup>2</sup> by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The intention required is to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes. The Church finds the reason for this possibility in the universal saving will of God and the necessity of Baptism for salvation.<sup>3</sup>

**1265** Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adopted son of God, who has become a “partaker of the divine nature,” member of Christ and co-heir with him,<sup>2</sup> and a temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

***Vatican Council II***

Baptism, of itself, is only a beginning, a point of departure, for it is wholly directed toward the acquiring of fullness of life in Christ. Baptism is thus ordained toward a complete profession of faith, a complete incorporation into the system of salvation such as Christ himself willed it to be, and finally, toward a complete integration into eucharistic communion. *Ecumenism, 22*

#B6-5



***Summary Prayer***

*Jesus our Lord, by the Easter mystery You touch our lives with the healing power of Your love. You have given us the freedom of the sons of God. May we who celebrate this gift find joy in it forever in heaven. May we hold fast to the life You have given us and come to the eternal gifts You promise. Lord, prepare for eternal joy the people You have renewed in Baptism.*

*Son of God, You were raised from the dead to lead us into life. Bless and sanctify all the children of Your Father, that we may share in Your kingly and priestly and prophetic office through the sacrament of Baptism and live our lives accordingly.*

*Christ our Life, through Baptism we were buried with You and rose to life with You; may we die to our corrupt affections and walk in the newness of life.*

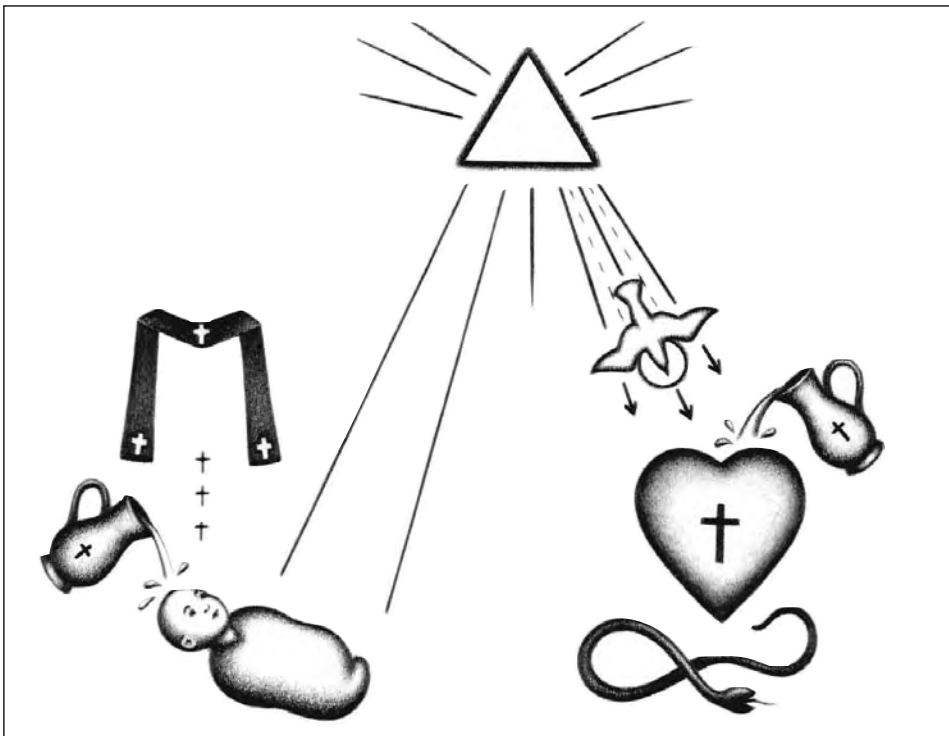
*With joy in our hearts, we call upon You, Christ the Lord. You died, rose again, and gave us new life through Baptism, and You live always to intercede for us. You are still our Priest, the Advocate Who always pleads our cause. You are the Victim Who dies no more, the Lamb once slain Who lives forever. Victorious King, hear our prayer. Amen.*

**Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise** (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. How does Baptism make a Christian share in the kingly, priestly, and prophetic works of Christ?
2. In the ordinary circumstances of your life, what good works can you offer as spiritual sacrifices to God?
3. Ask our Lord to help you to share in His kingly, priestly and prophetic works by means of a life of faith and charity.

### Catechism by Diagram

#B6-7



**Effects of Baptism.** The priest (stole) is normally the minister who pronounces the words of Baptism while he applies the matter, flowing water, upon the head of the one being baptized. As a consequence of the sacrament, we become children of God (triangle), the first grace (dove) is given (arrows) to us, our sins are taken away (serpent leaving), and the character of a Christian (cross) is impressed upon our souls (heart).



### **Chapter Summary Prayer**

*Father in heaven, You gave us the Easter mystery as our covenant of reconciliation. May the new birth we celebrate in Baptism show its effects in the way we live. Bring to perfection the spirit of life we receive from Your heavenly gifts. Free us from our attachment to the passing things of life and help us to set our hearts on the Kingdom of heaven. You are present in the sacrament of our Baptism. Renew Your Spirit of adoption in us who were born again in this sacrament. May the work of our humble service be brought to perfection by Your mighty power. Quicken the spirit of sonship in Your Church, and renew us in mind and body to give You whole-hearted service. May all of us who were buried with Christ in the death of Baptism also rise with Him to newness of life.*

*Heavenly Father, we have been buried with Christ in Baptism so that we may rise with Him to a new life. We now renew the promises we made in Baptism when we rejected Satan and his works, and promised to serve You faithfully in Your holy Catholic Church.*

*We reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises. We reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children. We reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin. We reject Satan, father of sin and the prince of darkness.*

*We believe in You, God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, Your only Son, our Lord, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at Your right hand.*



*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.*

*Father, make us mindful of the dignity You gave us in Baptism, and may we live for You in every moment of our lives. We ask this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 58

*See Appendix A for more references.*

### **Q. 201. What is the sacrament of Baptism?**

*Catechesis in Our Time, John Paul II, sect. 24;*

*Gospel of Life, John Paul II, sect. 79;*

*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 11-14;*

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11;*

*On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church, John Paul II, sect. 22;*

*On Reconciliation and Penance, John Paul II, sect. 27;*

*Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 18;*

*Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), Vatican II, sect. 6, 66-70.*

### **Q. 202. What relationship with God is begun at Baptism?**

*The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 11-14, 34, 51;*

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 11;*

*On Reconciliation and Penance, John Paul II, sect. 27;*

*Redeemer of Man, John Paul II, sect. 18, 21;*

*Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 119.*



## Thought Provokers

*Please see Appendix C for the answers.*

- Q. 201: What is the difference between the Baptism of St. John the Baptist and that which Jesus gave His Church?
- Q. 202: If a validly baptized Christian joins another religion such as Judaism, does he cease to be a Christian?