

Baptism and Original Sin

(version 03.2022)



Baptism and Original Sin

Original Sin

God created man in his image and likeness (**Gen 1:26**) and man lived in the God's friendship.

CCC 397-398 Man, tempted by the devil, let his trust in his Creator die in his heart and, abusing his freedom, disobeyed God's command. This is what man's first sin consisted of. Made in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God", but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God."

As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve immediately lost the grace of original holiness or "*perfected nature*". (**Gen 3:16-19**)

- They lost the control of their passions.
- The union of man and woman is now subject to lust and dominion.
- The harmony with nature is broken and is hostile to him.
- Death makes its entrance into human history.

Notes: _____

The whole human race is implicated by Adam's sin.

- **Rom. 5:17** It was by one man's offence that death came to reign over all, but how much greater the reign in life of those who receive the fullness of grace and the gift of saving justice, through the one man, Jesus Christ.
- **1Cor. 15:21-22** As it was by one man that death came, so through one man has come the resurrection of the dead. Just as all die in Adam, so in Christ all will be brought to life;

Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all the human race. By yielding to the Devil, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin that affected human nature. It is this "dis-graced" nature they would transmit *in a fallen state* to their progeny. This is what we call "*Original Sin*" – the **state of fallen nature** passed on by Adam to his descendants and inherited by all human beings.

Baptism, by imparting the life-giving grace of Christ, removes this state of fallen nature and restores our nature to that of one higher than Adam's – that of Christ's. We are given an "*elevated nature*". (see St. Thomas Aquinas below)

Human nature, though, is still wounded, subject to ignorance, suffering and death. It is inclined to sin — inclined to evil that is called **concupiscence**. Concupiscence causes us to a continually battle sin for the remainder of our lives.

Why did God not prevent the first man from sinning?

Man's free will is one of God's greatest gifts. One cannot truly love God if he is not free to do so. God knew Adam and Eve would fall from grace, but God would send a greater blessing, Christ, to save all the human race and undo what the Devil had done.

- St. Leo the Great responds, "Christ's inexpressible grace gave us blessings better than those the demon's envy had taken away."¹
- St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "There is nothing to prevent human nature's being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good . . . 'O happy fault, . . . which gained for us so great a Redeemer!'"²
- St. Paul says, 'Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more' (**Rom 5:20**)

Baptism

Baptism is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church and the first of three "Sacraments of initiation," which include the Eucharist and Confirmation.

A **sacrament** is an outward sign instituted by Christ that gives grace.

Sanctifying Grace is the very life and essence of God that is given to us through the sacraments and makes us "partakers of the Divine nature." (*2 Pt 14*)

Notes: _____

CCC 1213 Holy **Baptism** is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door, which gives access to the other sacraments. Through **Baptism** we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "**Baptism** is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

The sacrament of Baptism accomplishes the following:

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

¹ St. Leo the Great, *Sermo* 73, 4: PL 54, 396.

² Aquinas, St. Thomas, *STh* III, 1, 3, ad 3; cf. Rom 5:20.

- **Acts 2:38** Peter says, "You **must reform** and be **baptized**, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your *sins may be forgiven*;
- **Acts 22:16** "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and *wash away your sins*, calling on his name."
- **CCC 1263** By **Baptism** *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin (temporal punishment).

INCORPORATION (Sonship)

When we are "IN" Jesus Christ, we are the Father's adopted sons through baptism

- **1 Cor 12:13** "For by one Spirit we were all *baptized into one body* -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit. "
- **Gal 3:26-27** "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."

RECEPTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Acts 2:38** When asked what the people are to do, Peter says, "You must repent and be **baptized**, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven; then you will *receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*."
- **Acts 19:2-6** ". . . On hearing this, they were **baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the *Holy Spirit came on them*; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."

Notes: _____

TRANSFORMATION

- **Titus 3:5** "he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the *washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit*." (See **Acts 22:16**)
- **Rom 6:4** "We were *buried 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*."
- **2 Cor. 5:17** So whoever is *in Christ* is a *new creation*: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.

SALVATION

- **Titus 3:5** "he *saved us* . . . in virtue of his own mercy, by the **washing** of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit." (See **Acts 22:16**)

- **Mk 16:15** "Go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and *is baptized will be saved*; whoever does not believe will be condemned."
- **Jn 3:5** "I solemnly assure you, no one can enter into kingdom of God without being *born of water and Spirit*." (See **Jn 3:22** for context)
- **1 Pet 3:20-22** ". . . *Baptism, which 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"

Baptism's Symbolism

Water is . . .

Pure and is used for **washing**, which symbolizes making one pure through the forgiveness of sins.

Life-giving and symbolizes the "newness of life" and the reception of salvation.

- **CCC 1238** The *baptismal water* is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis (invocation). The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be "born of water and the Spirit." (**Jn 3:5**)

The Sign of the Cross – we are signed with the indelible mark of Christ

- **CCC 1235** The *sign of the cross*, marks with the imprint of Christ, the one who is going to belong to him and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by his cross.

Notes: _____

Anointing with the Oil of Catechumen

- **CCC 1237** Since **Baptism** signifies liberation from sin and from its instigator the devil, one or more *exorcisms* are pronounced over the candidate. The celebrant then anoints him with the oil of catechumens, or lays his hands on him, and he explicitly renounces Satan. Thus prepared, he is able to *confess the faith of the Church*, to which he will be "entrusted" by **Baptism**.

Anointing with Oil of Chrism

- **CCC 1241** signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one “anointed” by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king.

White Garment and Candle

- **CCC 1243** The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has “put on Christ,” (**Gal 3:27**) and has risen with Christ. The *candle*, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are “the light of the world.”

Infant Baptism

Baptism is a FREE gift of grace from God. There is nothing anyone can do to merit baptism.

- **CCC 1216** It (baptism) is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own;
- **CCC 1250** Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in **Baptism** to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant **Baptism**. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer **Baptism** shortly after birth.

OT Typology

Circumcision on the 8th day was the entry into the family of God in the Old Testament.

- **Gen 17:12** He that is eight days old among you shall be circumcised; Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.

Baptism now replaces circumcision.

- **Col. 2:11-12** In him you were also circumcised with a *circumcision not administered by hand*, by stripping off the carnal body, with the **circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith . . .

Notes: _____

Circumcision was exclusively for males. Baptism now incorporates females into the family of God.

- **Gal 3:27-28** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is *neither male nor female*; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We didn't choose our earthly family . . . it's ok if we are not given the option choose our spiritual family either.

- **Acts 16:31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your *household* will be saved." So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. He took them in at that hour of the night and bathed their wounds; then *he and all his family were baptized at once*.
- **Acts 2:38-39** Peter says, "You must reform and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven; and you shall receive the Holy Spirit. For the *promise is to you and your children*."

Just because an infant has not sinned or can't repent, doesn't mean that they should be denied baptism. Jesus did not need to repent, yet received a baptism of repentance from John to "fulfill all righteousness". (**Mk 1:9**) Note that the Holy Spirit descended upon him and was declared to be the "Son" of God.

Just because an infant can't "have faith" or profess his faith, doesn't mean he should remain outside the family of God, not receive the Holy Spirit, not be transformed or receive salvation. An infant, as all of us, must have the stain of *original sin* (disgraced human nature) removed from his soul through baptism.

Children That Die Unbaptized

The Church has no official teaching on what happens to unbaptized infants. What do we know?

- We know that baptism is necessary to enter into the Kingdom of God.
- We know that having never committed mortal sin, they don't deserve hell.
- If not in hell, then they enjoy some type of heavenly bliss, but distinct from a baptized person.

Notes: _____

So what is Limbo?

- Limbo is a theological attempt to explain "where" an unbaptized infant goes after death. It is not heaven nor hell. Limbo is not an official teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Lord, for whatever reason, has not revealed the answer to this question through Sacred Scripture nor Sacred Tradition handed down to us by the Apostles.

- **CCC 1261** As regards *children who have died without **Baptism***, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God . . . 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," allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without **Baptism**.

Who Can Baptize?

- **CCC 1256** The ordinary ministers of **Baptism** are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. In case of necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required intention, can baptize, by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The intention required is to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes.