

Jim's Notes
August 1, 2007
The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians
Ephesians 1:16-19

What Happens in the Sacrament of Baptism?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1262 The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal. Thus the two principal effects are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit.

For the forgiveness of sins . . .

1263 By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.

1264 Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls concupiscence, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (fomes peccati); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." Indeed, "an athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

"A new creature"

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, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

1266 The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification:

- enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues;
- giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.

Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism.

Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ

1267 Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore . . . we are members one of another." Baptism incorporates us into the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body."

1268 The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood." By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light." Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.

1269 Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us. From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to "obey and submit" to the Church's leaders, holding them in respect and affection. Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church.

1270 "Reborn as sons of God, [the baptized] must profess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church" and participate in the apostolic and missionary activity of the People of God.

The sacramental bond of the unity of Christians

1271 Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church: "For men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. Justified by faith in Baptism, [they] are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church." "Baptism therefore constitutes the sacramental bond of unity existing among all who through it are reborn."

An indelible spiritual mark . . .

1272 Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.

1273 Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity.

1274 The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord ("Dominicus character") "for the day of redemption." "Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life." The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith," with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection.

What Happens in the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation (divine sonship) which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
- it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:

Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.

1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.

1305 This "character" perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (quasi ex officio)."

**The Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation
from the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus
as it was celebrated in Rome as early as AD 180.**

The bishop will then lay his hand upon them, invoking, saying:

"Lord God, you who have made these worthy
of the removal of sins through the bath of regeneration,
make them worthy to be filled with your Holy Spirit,
grant to them your grace,
that they might serve you according to your will,
for to you is the glory,
Father and Son
with the Holy Spirit,
in the Holy Church,
now and throughout the ages of the ages.

All: Amen.

After this he (the bishop) pours the oil into his hand, and laying his hand on each of their heads, says:

"I anoint you with holy oil
in God the Father Almighty,
and Christ Jesus,
and the Holy Spirit."

Then, after sealing each of them on the forehead, he (the bishop) shall give them the kiss of peace and say:

"The Lord be with you."
And the one who has been baptized shall say,
"And with your spirit."

**The Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation
in the current Western Rite of the Catholic Church**

The bishop faces the people and with hands joined, sings or says:

My dear friends,
in baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life,
to his chosen sons and daughters.
Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit
to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts

and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

All: (pray in silence for a short time)

The bishop and the priests who will minister the sacrament with him lay hands upon all the candidates (by extending their hands over them). The bishop alone sings or says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

The Anointing With Chrism

The deacon brings the chrism to the bishop. Each candidate goes to the bishop, or the bishop may go to the individual candidates. The one who presented the candidate places his right hand on the latter's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the bishop; of the candidate may give his own name.

The bishop dips his right thumb in the chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

(making the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead, with Chrism)
N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Confirmand: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Confirmand: And also with you.