

Baptism is the ground floor sacrament religion essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Baptism is not just the first of the seven sacraments; it's the ground floor sacrament. Why? Because if you're not baptized, you can't receive any of the other sacraments. You have to be baptized to be confirmed. You have to be baptized to receive absolution. You have to be baptized to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. Finally, you have to be a baptized man to be ordained as a priest.

Baptism first gives a person everlasting life and the other sacraments add to or work with baptism to help the soul grow. The moment we are conceived, we receive our soul. When we're baptized, our soul receives its mark. So, the very foundation of everlasting existence is the ground floor Sacrament of Baptism.

Baptism shows what the Church understands about the sacraments. The sacraments which we can see give the grace that we can't see and which they signify. A newborn baby doesn't have to do anything. The sacrament itself works and gives God's grace, just because the baby is being baptized.

MEANING OF BAPTISM

We could say the Baptism is the sacrament of being reborn. Even though we are biologically born of our human parents, Baptism gives us a new life. And we need this new life because we hope to be heaven bound after when we die. What we call death is only the separation of our soul from our body. The soul is meant to live. Spiritually our soul will never die. But if it's not powered by the grace we receive at Baptism, both body and soul die.

INSTITUTED BY JESUS

Jesus speaks of Baptism during a conversation with Nicodemus. “ How can a man be born again? Can he go back into his mother’s womb?”[John 3: 4] This set up was perfect for Jesus to teach about Baptism. He said, “ I tell you the truth, unless one is born from water and the spirit he cannot enter God’s kingdom.”

Through Jesus’ teaching we see that Baptism is necessary. So necessary that the Church recognizes Baptism from other Christian churches, so as long as the sacrament is conferred using water, while the words, “ I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” are said.

Just how necessary is Baptism? Absolutely necessary. One can receive Baptism of water or even of desire. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 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,” 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.

REMOVAL OF ORIGINAL SIN

The effect of Baptism is to remove the stain of original sin. Sin is washed away. After the age of reason, a baptized person is cleared not just from original sin but all sin committed up to that point.

EVERLASTING LIFE

By Adam's sin, we lost our share in divine life. Baptism restores our soul.

This is the new birth Christ spoke about to Nicodemus; He said that we must be born again of water and the Holy Spirit. The only thing required is remaining spiritually alive when we die. The Church does have a name for the source of everlasting life. Sanctifying grace. What our soul is to our body, sanctifying grace is to the soul.

GIFTS, FRUITS AND VIRTUES

Baptism gives life to the soul; it also gives it Soul Food from the Holy Spirit. The big three are faith, hope and charity.

By faith we believe everything which God reveals: that He is part of the Holy Trinity; that God became man in the person of Jesus, Son of Mary; that Jesus suffered and died for our sins; that He's really present in the Eucharist; that the Church Christ founded is the real road to salvation, and that the earthly head of this Church is the successor of St. Peter, who Christ made the rock, so what the Pope teaches, is the teaching of Christ Himself.

In hope we trust that all the things promised to us by God are true and available; that we will not be without the strength to perform these things; that no trial we're given will be greater than we can bear; that provided we cooperate with God's , heaven is ours.

Through charity we love God above everything; to love Him more than ourselves; to love Him especially when He sends us seemingly unbearable tasks and to love Him no matter how demanding His love might be.

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MEMBERSHIP IN THE FAMILY (a friend of ours)

Baptism brings the person into Christ's Church. What does this mean? The Second Vatican Council says " 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." CCC 1271 So, Baptism makes us a part of the family.

Baptism is also the door to obtaining such graces. The Church is the sacrament of salvation. All the graces that we can receive are funneled through the Church. The baptized have a right to these graces.

SOULFUL TATTOO

The final effect of Baptism is the permanent seal. Baptism gives us a likeness to Christ. That seal will remain on our soul through our lives on earth and into eternity. The baptismal character is permanent because nothing can remove it. A baptized person always remains a Christian because the baptismal makes it a permanent relationship with Christ.

YOU'VE GOT THE GIFTS...NOW USE THEM

Faith without works is dead. How do we grow in our faith? How about by studying, praying and actually walking the walk... putting what we believe into practice.

CONFIRMATION...SPIRITUAL WEIGHTLIFTING

The biblical authority for Confirmation is Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. St. Luke writes that just before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24: 49) On the same occasion, Jesus promised, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." We're told that converts to the faith were first baptized, and then the Apostles "laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8: 17).

So, the basic reason Christ instituted the Sacrament of Confirmation was so His followers would be witnesses of the faith. The original Greek term for witnesses is "martyrs." Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday so His disciples could be His martyrs.

Confirmation strengthens the character we receive in Baptism. Confirmation increases our grace so we remain spiritually alive. It gives us the power to become more Christ-like.

There are three sacraments that give this soulful tattoo: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

Confirmation gives us strength to undergo not so pleasant tasks and the courage to sacrifice. Confirmation draws us to Christ the teacher.

Confirmation likens us to Christ the King. It gives us leadership that can help direct others on the path of salvation. We could describe the character of

Confirmation as witness to Christ and the Church.

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CAN I GET A WITNESS?

If we look at Pentecost Sunday, we get a pretty good insight as to what Confirmation does. According to Tradition, it was on Pentecost that the disciples received their Confirmation when the Holy Spirit descended on them. Fifty days before that Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. Now he's standing in front of thousands of people and speaking to them with conviction like never before. It's obvious. What happened between Peter and the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday happens to us on our Confirmation Day. We receive the power to witness to Jesus.

SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE

Confirmation helps develop our sense of mission and fan the flames of our desire to share with others what has been shared with us. Spreading the Faith is one of the gifts of Confirmation. It is by our love of others that we want to communicate our Faith. This witnessing of the Faith is not just for evangelizing unbelievers or converting sinners. Confirmation deepens the faith of a believing Catholic and gives him the power to be the source to strengthen other Catholics. Unlocking the gift of our Confirmation is sharing our faith with others.

DEFEND THE FAITH

The Sacrament of Confirmation gives us the power to defend our faith. We can't defend what we don't understand. Neither can we defend what we're not convinced is true. You simply have to believe what you profess and when you really believe it...you want to protect it.