

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA Baptism

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:3–4)

Insight

When have you felt you were given a new lease on life? What was that like? How did it happen?

Jack had always dismissed the twelve-step process as rubbish. However, that was likely the alcohol talking. He was sober now and wouldn't think of missing his regular meetings that occurred two times a week. The first time he talked about his craving, he felt raw and ashamed. Now he realized he needed the members of his group. He needed their support.

Without his family and friends who had confronted him in an intervention and without the twelve-step process and its members, Jack knew he'd be dead—or close to it. Sobriety opened up a whole new avenue . . . a whole new life . . . a whole new *Jack*.

For Reflection . . .

For those to whom the Good News of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed and who, therefore, have the possibility of requesting it, the Sacrament of Baptism is necessary for Salvation. Jesus freely submitted himself to be baptized.

Who were the first persons who drew you into the Good News of Jesus Christ? How did they do that?

Imagine that it is only a few hours prior to your Baptism. What would you be saying to God the Father and to Jesus, his Son, in your prayer at that time?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1213–1284

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 183–199

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 251–264

Church Teaching

Gift of New Life

Baptism, the first Sacrament one receives, opens the way to all of the other sacraments. Baptism is a powerful sacrament in which we are born anew, and it bears an amazing fruitfulness.

Signs Convey the Mystery Received

Baptism happens when one is immersed into water or when water is poured over the head three times while the minister of the sacrament says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” After the invocation of the name of each Person of the Holy Trinity, an immersion or pouring occurs.

The use of water suggests a drowning—a dying, a washing away of the old, sinful self and a bath—and a regeneration that brings freshness and newness. The words spoken, invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, proclaim that this new person, born again by divine grace, has become a participant in the life of the Holy Trinity, a life that unlocks for us Salvation, holiness, and the ultimate happiness of Heaven.

Joyful Sons and Daughters

Reborn as children of God, we profess in words and deeds the faith, hope, and love which brought us to the font of Baptism. Our mission in life is thus joyous: we too spread the Good News so that others may be saved.

God's children, reborn in Baptism, are named *Christian*. We belong to Christ. We bear his name together with all those who have been baptized, even those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. The name is a privilege and a responsibility to which we continually aspire as brothers and sisters, we who have been called out of darkness into God's wonderful light.