

09. Baptism

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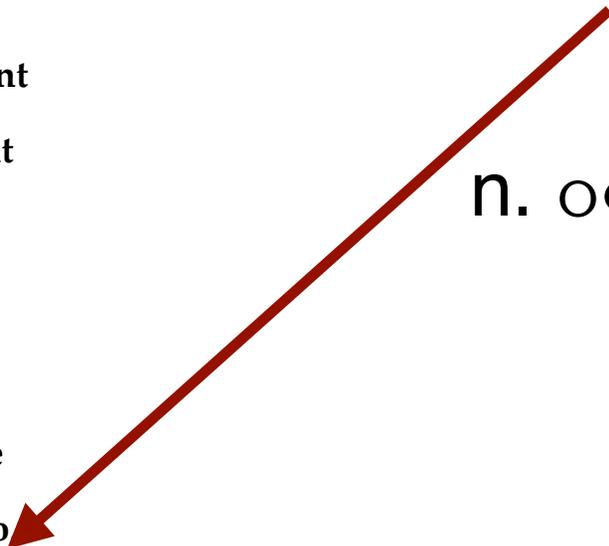
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n. 090. Baptism



Jesus' Baptism: Mark 1:9-11

Greek **baptizein** = 'to be plunged into' 'overwhelmed by'

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan

And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart

and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."



he saw the heavens torn apart

I. Overwhelmed by love

Jesus is God's Word in response to our longing

'O that you would **tear open the heavens and come down** ... We sinned. Because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away ... Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand ... will you restrain yourself, O Lord? Will you keep silent, and punish us so severely?'(Isaiah 64:1-12).

and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

‘ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters’(Genesis 1:1-2).

‘The voice of my beloved! Look, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag ... My beloved speaks and says to me: Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely’(Song of Songs 2:8-14).

And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

Intimate Communion + Mission

‘Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching ... I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness’ (Isaiah 42:1-7).

Catechism 11.20 Sacrament of Baptism

‘I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed!’ (Luke 12:50).

‘Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ (Mark 10:38).



Water from
Jesus'
pierced side

Through baptism we are taken into the intimate communion of
Jesus and the Father

‘I will take you to myself,
so that where I am, there you may be also’ (John 14:3).

‘The Spirit dwells with you and is in you’ (John 14:17).

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In
a little while the world will no longer see me, but you
will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that
day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in
me, and I in you’ (John 14:18-20).

‘I pray, Father, that even as you are in me and I am in you, they also will be in us’ (John 17:21).

‘You who live according to the Spirit set your minds on the things of the Spirit ... If Christ is in you your spirits are alive’ (Romans 8:5, 10)

‘You have been **enlightened**,
and have tasted the heavenly gift,
and have shared in the Holy Spirit,
and have tasted the goodness of the word of God
and the powers of the age to come’ (Hebrews 6:4-5).

One with Christ we are one with each other

n. 1213

‘In baptism we are ... reborn as “sons” of God;
we become “members” of Christ;
we are incorporated into the Church,
and made sharers in Jesus’ mission.’

‘We are members of one another’ (Ephesians 4:25).

n. 1271

‘Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. “For those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptised are put in communion with the Catholic Church, however imperfectly ... Incorporated into Christ, they are rightly called Christians and are accepted as brothers and sisters by the children of the Catholic Church” (Vatican II UR 3).

We are empowered by God's Spirit
to live with Jesus a life of holiness

'We constantly give thanks to God for you,
brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because
God chose you for salvation through the gift of
his Spirit who makes you holy' (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

‘You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God ... your bodies are members of Christ ... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God. You are not your own’ (1Corinthians 6:11, 15, 19).

‘My little children, I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you’ (Galatians 4:19).

We share in Jesus' Mission

n. 1213

‘In baptism we are ... reborn as “sons” of God;
we become “members” of Christ;
we are incorporated into the Church,
and made sharers in Jesus’ mission.’

‘You belong to Christ to bear fruit for God in the
new life of the Spirit’ (Romans 7:4-6)

‘We are the aroma of Christ to God’ (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Anointed with Chrism

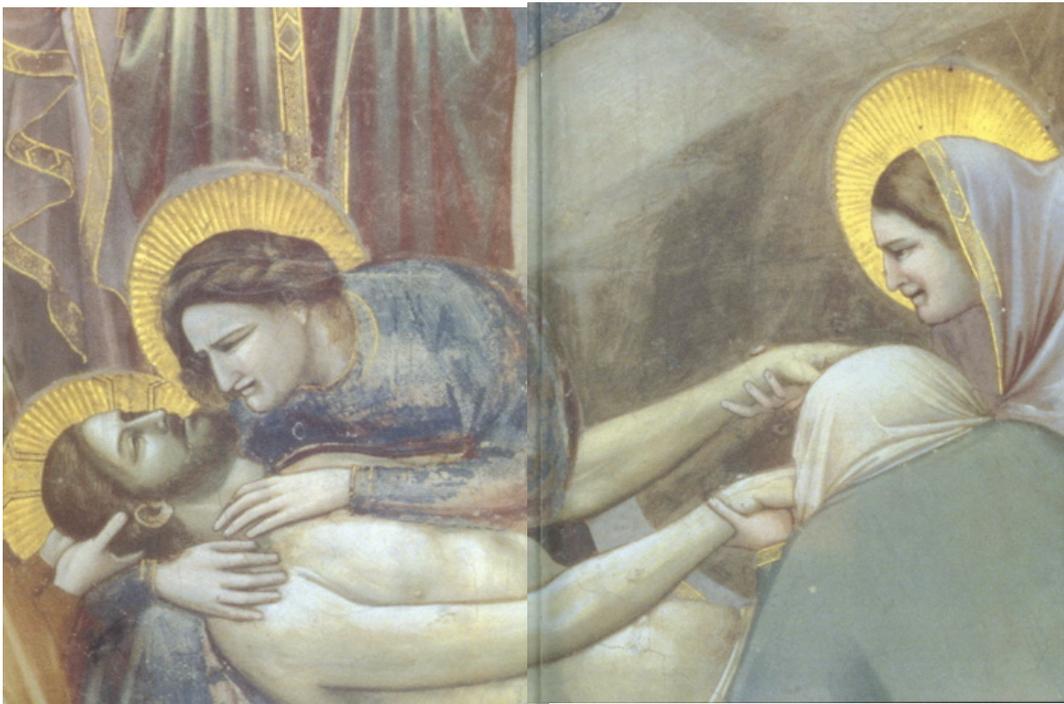
- Living the life of Jesus the priest: mediators of grace
- Living the life of Jesus the prophet: revealing God's word
- Living the life of Jesus the king: contributing to the reign of God

Greek *baptizein* = ‘to be plunged into’ ‘**overwhelmed by**’

n. 1214

2. Overwhelmed by dying

‘The “plunge” into the water symbolises the catechumen’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he/she rises up by resurrection with Christ, as a “new creature” (2Corinthians 5:17).



‘I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a **baptism** I must still receive, and how great is my distress until it is over!’ (Luke 12:49-50)

Giotto

Cleansed from sin

‘Peter said to them: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 2:38).

‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh’ (Ezekiel 36:25-26).

‘You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God’ (1 Corinthians 6:11).

‘Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word’ (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Dying to a way of “living” dominated by sin
and rising to share in Jesus’ life.

Freed from “Original Sin” - the sin of our origins.
We are given a choice, not locked into hereditary
and environmental “sin”.

Grace to not act from pride, covetousness, lust, anger,
gluttony, envy or sloth

Life experience teaches us that ways of behaving that have their source in such poisoned springs are decidedly dysfunctional and destructive. In baptism we die to these false values, even if they are the values of our mother or father or the social group with which we have been identifying. We have found something, or rather someone, in whom we experience God, and we have discovered a love which is true and liberating. In Jesus we have found a meaning that awakens the energy of our soul. To follow him we have to embrace him on the cross, but we choose to do that and we go down into the tomb with him to renounce behaviour that does not lead to life.

Necessity of “Baptism”

‘No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit’ (John 3:5).

‘The one who believes and is baptized will be saved’ (Mark 16:16).

A person who explicitly desires baptism but who dies without actually being baptised is considered to have ‘baptism of desire’.

Necessity of “Baptism”

‘Catechumens “are already joined to the Church ... and frequently living a life of faith, hope and love”(Vatican II AG 14§3). “With loving care mother Church already embraces them as her own”(Vatican II LG 14§3).

Others, without actually being baptised, give their lives as martyrs. This is considered “Baptism of blood”.

Necessity of “Baptism”

Baptism initiates a person into membership of the Church with all that that means. The mission of the Church is to welcome everyone into the Body of Christ. However

n. 1281

‘All those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to do God’s will, are saved even if they have not been baptised.’

The choices that they make imply that if they had known of Jesus and of the grace of entering into the Church through baptism, they would have done so. Perhaps they never heard of Jesus. Perhaps the 'Jesus' presented to them was so distorted that though they thought they were rejecting Christianity, they were in fact rejecting only a pseudo-Christianity and a distorted Jesus. God sees the heart.

Jesus is drawing everyone to himself and to communion with God. This overrides everything. The 'Baptism' that is essential is a person's openness to God's Spirit and welcoming the grace offered by Jesus. People do this when they respond to grace.

As regards children who die without receiving the sacrament, the same overwhelming consideration applies.

n. 1261

‘The great mercy of God and the compassion of Jesus allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism.’

The Baptismal liturgy

n. 1235

- Sign of the Cross - we welcome the embrace of him who gave his life in love for us. We belong to him and he to us.

n. 1236

- Proclamation of the Word

n. 1237

- Renounce sin and proclaim our faith

n. 1238

- Welcome God's Spirit on the water

n. 1239

- Threefold immersion or pouring of water

The Baptismal liturgy

‘Jesus said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Baptismal liturgy

n. 1241

- Anointing with Chrism - priest, prophet, king

n. 1243

- White garment - 'Clothe yourself in Christ'

n. 1243

- Candle - 'I am the light of the world' (John 9:5; Matthew 5:14)

n. 1243-4

- 'Our Father' - invitation to the altar and communion

CAPTIVATE US Leah Shafer

