

Baptism

1. To know the background of Baptism.
2. To understand the importance of Jesus' baptism.
3. To reflect on the difference sacraments can have in a person's life.



Key questions

1. What is Baptism?
2. Why are we baptised?
3. Why do we baptise infants?

Baptism

- + Baptism is the rite of initiation into the Christian faith.
- + The word 'baptise' comes from a Greek word 'baptizo' meaning 'to dip'.



Baptism unites us more firmly to Christ



- + Baptism is equivalent to birth: we are born of God, made sons and daughters of the Father in Christ Jesus.
- + **The complete renewal of our nature with the bestowal of the Spirit are given in baptism, in germ as it was were. But the gift has to unfold and reveal all it contains gradually. The help of the Spirit is required here too, for growth in Christian life.**
- + Baptism gives us this treasure, Confirmation, or rather the Holy Spirit, is the key that unlocks it.
- + **All is given in baptism; confirmation confirms, establishes, makes it deeper, firmer, extending it to the whole of our life.**
- + By baptism, we enter into God's family, we pass from death to life; we become living ones, alive in Christ. In Confirmation, we are life-giving.

Reflections on Baptism

+Pages 20 – 25 The Truth



A close-up photograph of a baby's hand being held by an adult's hand, symbolizing care and protection. The baby's hand is small and pinkish, with tiny fingers. The adult's hand is larger and more weathered, with visible skin texture. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a white garment, possibly a baptismal robe. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the skin tones.

Why do we
Baptise
infants?

Optional
Role play

The Infant Baptism Ceremony

- Narrator
- Celebrant (priest)
- Parents
- Child
- God parents
- All

Candle
Oil
Water
White garment

You will need to make notes of any key words and actions made during the infant baptism ceremony.

So what happens... Part 1

Celebrant: What name do you give your child? (or: have you given?)

Parents: N... (Christian forename of Baby)

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church for N.?

Parents: Baptism.

The celebrant speaks to the parents in these or similar words:

Celebrant: You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

Parents: We do.

Then the celebrant turns to the godparents and addresses them in these or similar words:

Celebrant: Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

Godparents: We are.

The Celebrant continues:

Celebrant :N., the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. in its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead, and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same.

He signs the child on the forehead, in silence. Then he invites the parents and (if it seems appropriate) the godparents to do the same.

Part 2: Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing Before Baptism

After the invocation:

The **celebrant** says: Almighty and ever-living God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendour of your kingdom of light. We pray for this child: set him (her) free from original sin, make him (her) a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him (her). We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Celebrant: We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Saviour; may he strengthen you with his power, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant anoints the child on the breast with the oil of catechumens.

Celebrant: May you have strength in the power of Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

And immediately the Celebrant lays his hand on the child in silence.

Part 3:

Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water



The celebrant questions the parents and godparents:

Celebrant: Do you reject Satan?

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: And all his works?

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: And all his empty promises.

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Parents and Godparents: I do.

Celebrant: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Part 4: Baptism

The celebrant invites the family to the font and questions the parents and godparents:

Celebrant: Is it your will that N. should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?

Parents and Godparents: It is.

He baptizes the child, saying:

“N., I baptize you in the name of the Father”, **He immerses the child or pours water upon it.** “and of the Son” **He immerses the child or pours water upon it a second time.** “and of the Holy Spirit”

He immerses the child or pours water upon it a third time. If the baptism is performed by the pouring of water, it is preferable that the child be held by the mother (or father).



Part 5 Anointing with Chrism

Then the celebrant says:

Celebrant: God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Then the celebrant anoints the child on the crown of the head with the sacred chrism, in silence.



Part 6 Clothing with the White Garment

The **celebrant** says:

(Name), you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.

All: Amen.



Part 7 Lighted Candle

The **celebrant** takes the Easter candle and says:

Receive the light of Christ.

Someone from the family (such as the father or godfather) lights the child's candle from the Easter candle.

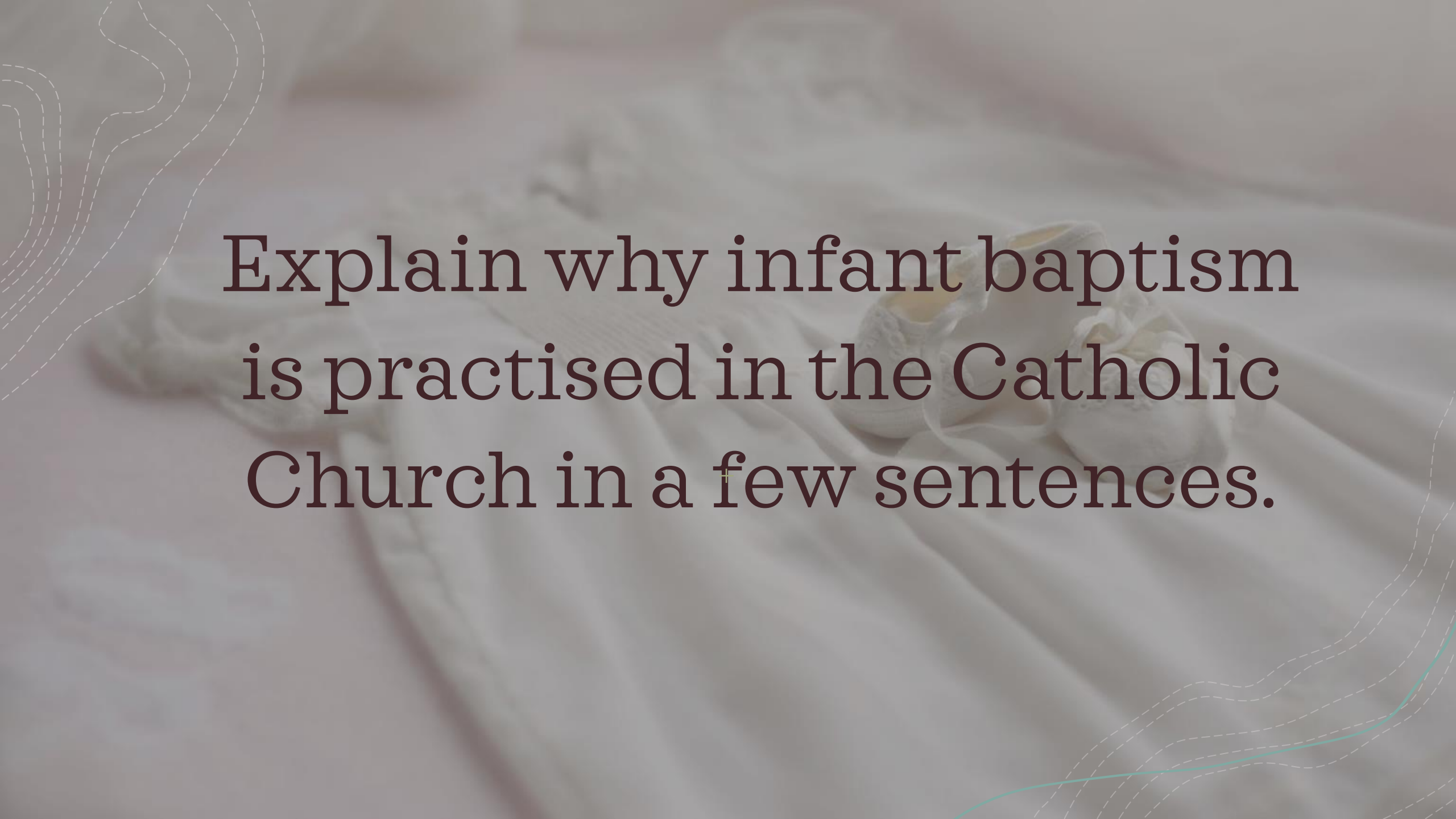
The **celebrant** then says:

Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.



Developments

- + From the sixth century, the baptism of infants was the norm.
- + Baptism was now seen as washing away original sin and promising eternal life.
- + In many areas of Europe Baptism still took place at Easter, and so Confirmation would take place at some time afterwards.
- + But with infant mortality on the increase some bishops began to advise parents not to wait until Easter for baptism.
- + Gradually baptism soon after birth was positively encouraged until finally it became church law that infant should be baptised very soon after birth to save them from the trauma of dying still stained with original sin.



Explain why infant baptism is practised in the Catholic Church in a few sentences.

Catholic Baptism Ceremony for Adults



- + Catholics welcome adults into the church through a process called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).
- + The church teaches that through the application of water - **baptism** - a believer is cleansed from sins and begins a new life.
- + Before baptism, adults undergo a preparatory period to introduce them to the church's teachings, creeds and prayers.
- + The baptism ceremony is public and is usually held during the Easter Vigil service on the day before Easter.

Adult Christian Baptismal Services



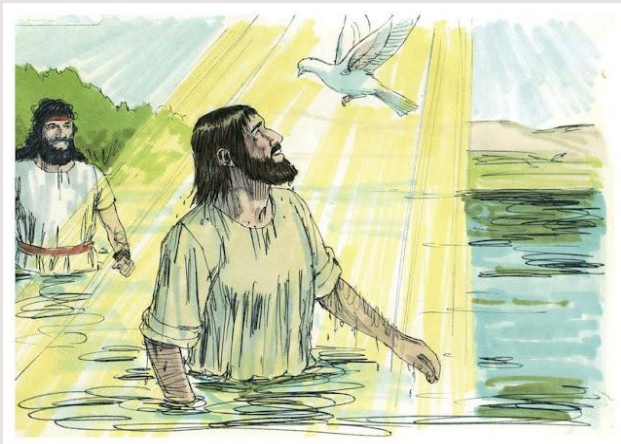
- + Baptism is a Christian ordinance that symbolizes the washing away of sin. Some believe that baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sins, while others believe it is symbolic of a forgiveness already received.
- + Some Christian churches reserve baptism for those old enough to consciously decide to receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- + Most Christian denominations offer baptism to adult converts. There are many varieties of Christian adult baptismal ceremonies, but they generally follow a basic pattern:

- + 1. **Scripture Reading** – Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism.
- + 2. **Prayer/ Invocation** – asking for God's presence to be with the baptismal candidate and congregation.
- + 3. **Profession of Faith** – questioned asked to the baptismal candidate to ascertain whether they have renounced evil and accepted Jesus as saviour.
- + 4. **Application of Water** – by either sprinkling or immersion, the priest/ ministers makes a baptismal pronouncement.
- + 5. **Thanksgiving and Introduction** – prayer of thanksgiving to God for his grace and forgiveness of sin that that is symbolized by baptism.

What do the Gospels tell us about the Baptism of Jesus?

Find either:

- + Matthew 3: 13-17
- + Mark 1:9-11
- + Luke 3: 21-23
- + John 1: 29-33



- 1) **Who is in this story?**
- 2) **What happened?**
- 3) **What was said?**
- 4) **How do you think the people present would have reacted to this? Why?**
- 5) **What does this story say about our baptism?**

https://youtu.be/9_dr9njVzKM Video clip



The importance of the Baptism of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus was the opening act of his public life among the people as a wandering preacher, teacher and miracle worker. The event was a kind of ceremony of initiation into the life God wanted him to lead.

The essential points about the baptism of Jesus were:

1. He was one of the people who came to John
2. He was baptised like the others.
3. The Spirit of God came in the form of a dove.
4. A voice proclaimed, 'This is my own dear Son.'

<https://youtu.be/JZ5jm5lx5bY>

...The importance of the baptism of Jesus

1. **The heavens opened** – God making himself known, being in God's presence.
2. **The Holy Spirit descended like a dove** upon Jesus; spirit: "breath/wind" that enables a person to act as God wills. The dove is a symbol of peace and purity and of God's universal covenant.
3. **'A voice from the cloud... "Beloved Son"'** God the Father revealed Jesus as his and spoke to his son from a cloud. In the OT, God spoke to Moses from a cloud.
4. **Jesus** showed he was willing to **identify himself** with the message and **baptism of John** and with the people who came to be baptised by him.
5. Jesus was **approved by God** as his beloved or only Son.
6. Jesus received the Holy Spirit, which **prepared him for his mission:** to perform the work of the Messiah.

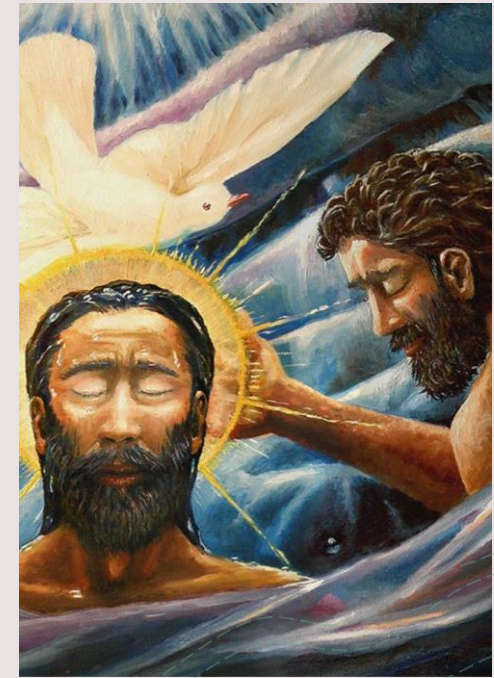


- + A new and important event occurred at the baptism of Jesus.
- + The ***Spirit of God*** descended upon Jesus (in the form of a dove) and there was an announcement:
- + *'This is my own dear son, with whom I am pleased'* Matthew 3:17

Background to Baptism in the Bible

- + Baptism was a ritual that the Jews of Jesus' day practised when being cleansed from impurities, or as part of the process of a non-Jew becoming a Jew.
- + However when John the Baptist baptised people, it was a symbol of forgiveness of sins. He asked all the people to turn away from their sins (Matthew 3:1-6; Mark 1:2-8, Luke 3:3-18) and baptism became a sign that they were going to do this.
- + This was in preparation for the new way of life that would start with the coming of the Messiah (Jesus).

<https://youtu.be/0k4GbvZUPuo>



licensed under CC BY-SA

Tasks



Pages 26-29

1

Explain why John the Baptist baptised people in the River Jordan.

2

Describe the baptism of Jesus.

3

Explain the importance of Jesus' baptism.

Baptism is a sacrament, but what actually is a sacrament?

- + Jesus never used the word 'sacrament' and it is not found in the Bible. The word 'sacrament' translates the Latin word sacramentum. This was an oath, particularly a soldier's oath of allegiance to his leader or emperor and the Roman gods. The first word used for what we now call 'sacraments' was the Greek word for 'mystery', Mysterion.
- + **The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes a sacrament as 'An outward sign of inward grace, ordained by Jesus Christ, by which grace is given to our souls.'**
- + **'A sacrament is a sacred sign by which we worship God, his love is revealed to us and his saving work accomplished in us. In the sacraments God shows us what he does and does what he shows us.'**

The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church.

As actions of Christ and of the Church, sacraments are signs and means by which faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification is brought about.

The word 'sacrament' for Catholic has now come to describe certain activities of the Church which express the presence of Christ acting in her.'

Are we meant to feel different when we receive a sacrament?





When a person
receives a
sacrament...

- + They might feel a deep inner peace
- + May not notice a change
- + Become aware of the power of the sacrament when they **'live it out'**

For example, when we go to **Mass / The Eucharist** and receive Jesus in **Holy Communion**, **Jesus is truly present within us**, even though we do not see him with our physical eyes. From this, we will have the **grace** to know Jesus better and to live it out by being **kind and helpful to others**.

Reflection

St Teresa of Avila said:

“Christ has no body on earth but yours.

Yours are the only hands with which he can do his work.

Yours are the only eyes through which his compassion can shine upon a troubled world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”



- A) How can we now be Christ's body on earth as in St Teresa's prayer?
- B) How do the sacraments give us the grace to do this?

Quick Check

Do you....

- Know the background of Baptism.
- Understand the importance of Jesus' baptism.
- Reflect on the difference sacraments can have in a person's life.

Key points so far...

Match the key word to its correct meaning

+ Baptism:

+ Chrism:

+ Covenant:

+ Original Sin:

+ Sacrament:



- An outward sign through which invisible grace is given to a person by Jesus.
- Sin that every person has as a result of the fall.
- To dip, bathe or wash
- An agreement between us and God
- Holy oil used in baptism

Key terms - Answers

- + **Baptism:** To dip, bathe or wash
- + **Chrism:** Holy oil used in baptism
- + **Covenant:** An agreement between us and God
- + **Original Sin:** Sin that every person has as a result of the fall.
- + **Sacrament:** An outward sign through which invisible grace is given to a person by Jesus.



What has this plant got to do with baptism?

What does it look like?

What do you think will happen if we put this plant in water?



What do you think it might feel like?

How does this plant link to the topic of Baptism? Why?



The Baptismal Plant

- + Water brings this plant to life.
- + The plant is used in Baptismal services and has been used in both Catholic and Orthodox Churches for many years.



**Why is baptism an
important
decision?**



life changing, determines identity, commitment.



Baptism is the start of a new life

“Peter answered... ‘every one of you must be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”



Acts of the Apostles



So, what difference might it make to your life?

Frank Cottrell Boyce




- + Read about how Frank used his Catholic faith in writing films that express how people put their beliefs into action, page 36.


Here is a clip from one of his films, Millions:

- + <https://youtu.be/Psq2wwYjOWo?si=yUfEMrU97ZBC1aKT>

- + Complete the activities on page 36.



+What have we
learnt today
about Baptism?



In what ways
will this
influence us in
our lives?