

God Calls Us to Reconciliation

Mankind turned away from God by disobedience, yet His love is so great that He sent His Only Son to earth in order to offer us forgiveness and new life.

God calls us through His Church

God calls us to reconciliation through the Catholic Church which Jesus founded to be His voice in the world. Through the Church, God invites us to answer his call by receiving the sacrament of Baptism.

Jesus gave us Baptism

This is affirmed through the below scripture readings

1. (Jn. 3:5)
2. (Mt 28:19)
3. (Acts 2:38)

Reconciliation, or reunion, of mankind with God in loving friendship, is called the Good News of our salvation.

The Effects of Baptism

Baptism is the first sacrament we receive. It can be received only once because it gives us a special unrepeatable sign called the Baptismal Seal. This invisible mark shows God that we have been united to Jesus by Baptism and have become his adopted children. It can never be taken away, not even by mortal sin. We also receive Baptism first, because it gives us the right to receive the other sacraments.

In order to make this spiritual rebirth possible, Jesus gave us the sacrament of Baptism. After his Resurrection he said to the apostles: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. *Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).*

The word "baptism" means "washing". This reminds us that through Baptism, God washes away the effects of original sin from our souls. If the person being baptized is old enough to have sinned himself, it takes these offenses away and also the temporal punishment for those sins.

When Our Lord came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. In the same way, The Holy Spirit comes down upon us, too, and fills us with the new life of sanctifying grace. We become his holy temples just as the Apostle Paul said in his first letter to the Corinthians: "You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within--the Spirit you have received from God" (1 Cor 6:9).

When the Spirit came down upon Jesus the people heard the voice of God the Father saying: "This is my beloved Son. My favor rests on him" (Mt 3:17). At our Baptism we become the beloved children of the Father and we are given the supernatural powers of faith, hope, and charity that help us live lives worthy of this Kingdom.

Baptism of desire and of blood

What happens to people who do not receive Baptism- do they go to Heaven?

There are two other ways of getting to Heaven for those who do not know about the sacrament or who have not been able to receive it before they die.

One of these ways is called Baptism of desire. This means that those who are sorry for their sins and who try to please God as best they know how, can be saved too. Baptism of desire can also save those who are truly ignorant of the sacrament, but who would receive it if they knew that it was necessary for salvation.

The other way of getting to Heaven is called Baptism of blood. This happens when a non-Christian gives up his life in martyrdom for Jesus. Quite often, during times when Catholics were persecuted for the faith, many non-believers would be so moved by the martyrs' heroism that they would defend the believers and join them in martyrdom. Thus, even though they had not received the sacrament, they showed faith in Jesus and were saved.

Words to know: reconciliation; baptismal seal; baptism of desire; baptism of blood.