

Baptism by Desire

Baptism by Desire is a deep desire within our heart and soul to accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. This desire grows within us the more we learn about Jesus and believe in his teachings. Our desire to follow Jesus and live our lives according to his teachings is called, *faith*.

Baptism by desire (*faith*) proceeds our baptism by water. After we are baptised by our desire to know and love Christ, we then seek to be obedient to Jesus' command that we must be *born again* by both *water* and by *Spirit*. Jesus explains this to Nicodemus in the Gospel recorded by his disciple, John:

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of *water* and the *Spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:1-6)

Our baptism by water is an external act that professes to the world we have been spiritually reborn into God's holy family. Our *faith* in Jesus Christ is what opens our soul to receive our baptism by the Holy Spirit of God.

During our baptism, the Holy Spirit of God fuses His eternal life within our soul. God is eternal and if we are to live eternally with Him, the presence of God must live in us!:

Jesus answered, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another *Counselor*, to be with you for ever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for he dwells with you, and *will be in you*. ¹⁸ I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ In that day you will know that *I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*. ²¹ He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and *manifest myself to him...*" (John 14:15-21)

Jesus tells us in John 14:26 that the *Counselor* is the Holy Spirit of God who will lead us to the truth that the words Jesus spoke come from God:

"He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. ²⁵ "These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. ²⁶ But the *Counselor*, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." (John 14:26)

God sent Jesus into our world to show us that the path to eternal life. Think of Jesus as our "portal" to God. Obedience to all of Jesus' teachings prepares our soul to become the *adopted* children of God. As one of Jesus' disciples said, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

For more information on this topic, please see the following link: <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/the-necessity-of-baptism>

Commentary on Baptism, from the book *On the Holy Spirit*, by Saint Basil

“When mankind was estranged from him by disobedience, God our Savior made a plan for raising us from our fall and restoring us to friendship with himself. According to this plan Christ came in the flesh, he showed us the gospel way of life, he suffered, died on the cross, was buried and rose from the dead. He did this so that we could be saved by imitation of him, and recover our original status as sons of God by adoption.

To attain holiness, then, we must not only pattern our lives on Christ’s by being gentle, humble and patient, we must also imitate him in his death. Taking Christ for his model, Paul said that he wanted to become like him in his death in the hope that he too would be raised from death to life.

We imitate Christ’s death by being buried with him in baptism. If we ask what this kind of burial means and what benefit we may hope to derive from it, it means first of all making a complete break with our former way of life, and our Lord himself said that this cannot be done unless a man is born again. In other words, we have to begin a new life, and we cannot do so until our previous life has been brought to an end. When runners reach the turning point on a racecourse, they have to pause briefly before they can go back in the opposite direction. So also when we wish to reverse the direction of our lives there must be a pause, or a death, to mark the end of one life and the beginning of another.

Our descent into hell takes place when we imitate the burial of Christ by our baptism. The bodies of the baptized are in a sense buried in the water as a symbol of their renunciation of the sins of their unregenerate nature. As the Apostle says: *The circumcision you have undergone is not an operation performed by human hands, but the complete stripping away of your unregenerate nature. This is the circumcision that Christ gave us, and it is accomplished by our burial with him in baptism.* Baptism cleanses the soul from the pollution of worldly thoughts and inclinations: *You will wash me*, says the psalmist, *and I shall be whiter than snow.* We receive this saving baptism only once because there was only one death and one resurrection for the salvation of the world, and baptism is its symbol.”

RESPONSORY Romans 6:3, 5, 4

By being baptized into Christ Jesus, we have all shared in his death.

- We became one with him by dying as he did; therefore we shall be one with him also in rising to new life.

By our baptism we were buried with him; we shared in his death.

- We became one with him by dying as he did; therefore we shall be one with him also in rising to new life.