

The Effects of Baptism

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Renfrew County CDSB, 2014

Baptism washes away Original Sin and makes us a *New Creation*

Baptism washes away the effects of Original Sin. Adam sinned, and its effect rippled out through creation and estranged humanity from God. Jesus, the New Adam paid the price for Original Sin with his life on the cross, destroying sin's dominion. He was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father. All the baptized, by being united to the crucified and risen Jesus are *re-created* to a new life in him – to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and share in the promise of the resurrection.

(Note: The Church teaches that "Every [person] who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity." CCC 1259)

Baptism makes us members of Christ's Body, the Church

United to Jesus through Baptism, we become members of his Body – that is, the Church. We are the body, and he is the Head. This becomes our deepest identity – by Baptism, *we belong* to Christ and to one another as members of his body, the Church.

Baptism makes us sharers in Christ's holiness

Baptism is the sacrament of holiness. By our union with Christ at Baptism, we share in his holiness. Our holiness in Christ grows as we respond to God's gracious initiative (*grace*), that reaches out and invites us to mature in self-giving love.

Baptism makes us sharers in the life of the Blessed Trinity

Baptism draws us into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit's communion of love. It unites us to Jesus, and gives us a new life in the Holy Spirit, in whom we cry out, "Abba!" to God the Father. By Baptism, the Trinity's inexhaustible life of grace and love becomes our own.

Baptism gives us the gifts of Faith, Hope and Love

The theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love are God's gifts to us at Baptism. Faith enables us to see with new eyes and believe, together with the community of believers. Hope allows us to trust God's promises, to pray with the assurance that God hears and answers our prayers, and to work for the Gospel's justice. Love enables us to love God above all things and to love others unselfishly as God loves them.

Doorway to a Life of Sacramental Grace

Baptism is the doorway to Christians' life in Christ. As members of Christ's body, the Church, we share in a life of grace that strengthens and heals us to live as his disciples on our earthly pilgrimage to our heavenly home. All the sacraments have their special grace to help us on this journey that begins at Baptism.

Marks Us With the Seal of Christ

Baptism changes us forever. This change is described as a permanent spiritual *seal* that shows we belong to Christ. Even in heaven, people will know we belong to him, because we have been configured to his likeness, and bear his seal.

Equal Dignity in the Body of Christ (Church)

As members of Christ's body through Baptism, each of us are equal in dignity:

*And if by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, yet **all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ.** (Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), No. 32)*

Complementary Roles in Building up the Body of Christ

While there is a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities (apostles, prophets, teachers, ... [1 Cor 12: 28]), all have a complementary part to play in building up the body. Take note of what St. Paul says:

As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1Cor 12: 20-27)

Love is the "New Law" of the Baptized

The baptized belong to Christ. The law that governs their life is the Gospel, summarized in the call to "Love one another as I have loved you." (CCC 1970)

Sharing in Christ's Divine Sonship

Our union with Christ at Baptism makes us intimate sharers in his own divine Sonship. Through him, with him and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we share his intimacy with the Father (sometimes described as the "Abba relationship." See Romans 8:15).

Participation in Christ's office of Priest, Prophet King

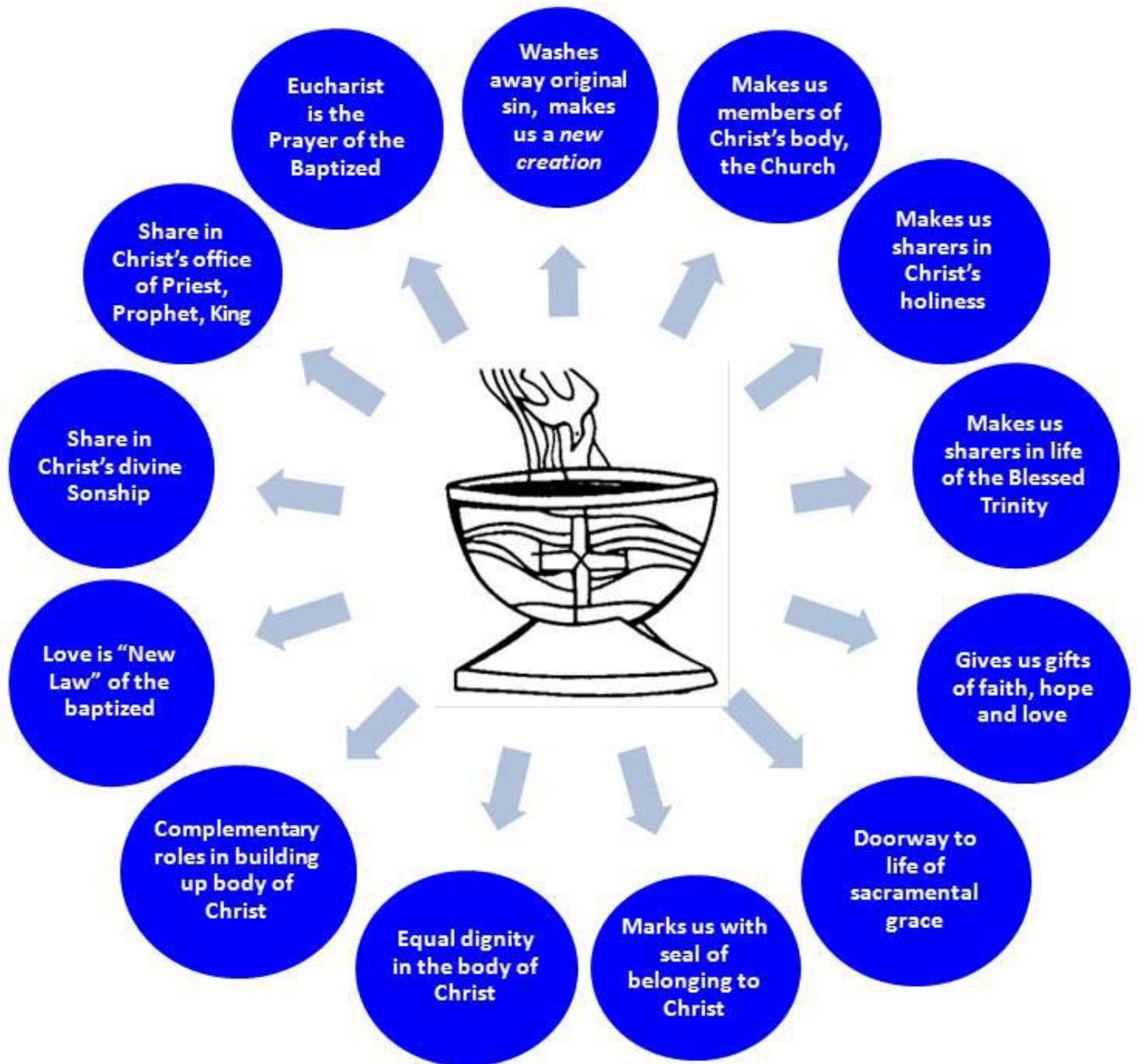
At Baptism, we are sealed with the oil of chrism and anointed priest, prophet and king. By this anointing, all share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ.

- **As sharers in Christ's priesthood**, each of us exercises our vocation and with Christ, offers our lives and activities - *through, with and in* Christ - to the Father.
- **As sharers in Christ's prophetic office**, we are called to evangelize (to announce the Gospel) in words and in the witness of our lives, to teach and lead others in faith.
- **As sharers in Christ's kingly office**, we are called to shape the world in our daily work and lives so that it conforms to the Gospel. If we have the expertise or invitation to do so, we are to cooperate with the Church's pastors and hierarchy to help with the growth of the Church community. (See CCC 901-913)

Eucharist is the Prayer of the Baptized

At Baptism we are united with Jesus, who constantly prays to the Father for us, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Eucharist, we join Jesus in his prayer to the Father. We pray *to* the Father, *through* Jesus the Son, *in* the power of the Holy Spirit. We receive *from* the Father (*through* Christ, *in* the power of the Holy Spirit), the Body and Blood of Jesus to nurture us to live as body of Christ. By our baptismal union with Christ, we share in the life of the Trinity; and the Trinitarian prayer of the Church, the Eucharist becomes our prayer.

Summary:



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