

To Know To Believe To Live – KBL2 Baptism 1 Official Handout

02.13.21 Version

Developed by Msgr. Michael Clay

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BAPTISM

Part I: Basic Foundations

I. Basics:

- A. Holy Spirit given in baptism bonds us permanently with the Holy Trinity (establishes vertical, intimate relationship with Divinity)
 1. Children of God and heirs to the Reign of God in which endless love, joy, and peace are forever present and experienced
 2. Brothers/Sisters of Jesus Christ who was, is, and will forever be the incarnation of divine merciful love for each person
 3. Accompanied 24/7 by the Holy Spirit
 4. Formally welcomed into the Divine Family
- B. This bond connects us to all who are baptized, saints and sinners (establishes horizontal, intimate relationship with a Church and its people)
 1. Baptized become bonded to the living, breathing, beautiful, and wounded body called the Church (DeLorenzo)
 2. The church is the communion of sinners—both repentant and unrepentant—that is also the communion of saints. It holds out hope for those who rebuke and turn away from the Messiah in its midst, it receives the confession of those who ask for his healing, and it communicates the charity of those who have become one with others in the love of Christ (DeLorenzo)
- C. Sin, Grace, and Empowerment
 1. All sin currently present in life of the one being baptized is removed/forgiven opening the channel of grace fully
 2. Baptism is into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ (dying and rising with Christ) which empowers us to assimilate its life-giving power as we face our own dyings/risings and our own ongoing struggles with sin and evil, both personal and social
- D. Disciples and Missionaries:
 1. Commits us to a life of discipleship and mission
 2. Disciple:
 - a. A follower of a leader perceived to be important; an adherent (loyal)
 - b. One who learns from a master
 - c. One committed to conversion as a way of life
 3. Basic definition of a missionary: God's sons and daughters sent forth by the Lord with the purpose of manifesting God's love and purpose for the world and bringing into God's reign people from every people and nation.

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E. Discussion:

1. Of these four basics of baptism, which one is the most relevant/significant for you personally today? Which one is the least relevant/ significance for you personally today? What is/are the reason(s) influencing your conclusion?
2. Baptism joins us to the Body of Christ, the Church, a community of sinners and saints. More and more people are foregoing baptism for a variety of reasons but a sinful Church is among the most mentioned reasons. What might you say in response to someone who uses this as a reason to forego baptism?

II. Infant and Believer Baptism:

A. Infant Baptism:

1. Establishes an unbreakable covenant with the Holy Trinity and child
2. A gift of unmerited grace from the source of all unmerited grace, God
3. Removal of original sin
4. Unbroken tradition of the Church
5. Family event, while laudatory, that increasingly tends to have minor impact on everyday life because parents/godparents fail to understand themselves what has been given to the child (and often themselves) and do not form/reinforce what has been received.

B. Believer Baptism:

1. A choice freely made by someone old enough to understand what baptism means.
2. Removal of original sin and forgiveness of actual sins
3. Formation focuses on age-appropriate catechesis, worship, community, and discipleship that precedes baptism

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C. Discussion:

1. As you consider the pros and cons to infant and believer baptism, which is more convincing to you?

2. What would you see as important to help infant baptism have a deeper impact in the life of the baby's parents and godparents after baptism?

III. Challenges to Living Baptism Today:

A. Human Challenges:

1. Because baptism isn't magic or a life insurance policy that indemnifies us unconditionally, we remain partners with God in nurturing the grace of baptism within us
2. We have to face the crucifixion of confronting and converting our selfishness, our blindness to others, our fears, and even our resentment that being a Christian isn't easy (Philibert, 26)
3. Conversion as a way of life does not come easily to us

B. Societal/Cultural Challenges:

1. Being Christian in a culture focused on comfort and pleasure
2. Choosing to live for others (the Body of Christ) rather than for myself is difficult in an increasingly "me" centered culture
3. The world pulls us away from intentional (interior) living such that we live largely unreflective lives
4. Learning to live the *imago Christi* within us requires lifelong formation, something that consciously concludes for many Catholics at Confirmation.

C. Discussion:

1. How do we compete with a world that is telling us, especially our young people, 24/7 that faith, religion, God, Jesus, church, etc., aren't worth all the trouble?

2. How might a casual Catholic, someone who lives Catholicism on his/her own terms, become a committed one, living his or her faith on the Lord's terms?

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IV. Baptism and Salvation: Other Considerations:

- A. Catholics believe baptism is necessary for salvation (CCC 1257) but that salvation doesn't always require baptism
1. Baptism by Desire: those who desire baptism at the time of death but are not baptized (e.g., catechumens)
 2. Baptism by Blood: unbaptized who die because of their faith in Jesus
 3. Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. (*Lumen Gentium*, 16)

V. Ongoing Reflection:

Reflect on where you are currently in knowing, believing, and living your understanding the importance of your baptism today in light of this presentation AND how you might be invited to take another step forward growing in this area of faith.

VI. References:

Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd edition. Holy See. 2011.

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The Priesthood of the Faithful. Paul Philibert. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005.