



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

25 August 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Baptism \ˈbap-ˈti-zəm\

One of three sacraments of Initiation, along with Confirmation and First Eucharist. **Baptism**, which means “dipping,” involves immersion into or pouring of water over a prospective church member to inaugurate the journey of faith. In **Baptism**, Christians believe one dies to sin and lives for Christ, imbued with the Holy Spirit.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-baptism>

CONTEXT

If we beheld a soul after **Baptism** with the eyes of faith, we would see angels taking their watch around it.
—Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Baptism is the end of the Old Testament, and the beginning of the New.
—Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

WHY IT MATTERS

In the Early Church, new members were received into the church at the Easter Vigil by means of the three initiating sacraments. Much later, infant **Baptism** became the norm due to fear of death, and emphasis of **Baptism's** role in cleansing the soul of original sin obscured its foundation to bring new members into the church and endow them with the Holy Spirit. More recently restored rites make **Baptism's** purpose and unity with Confirmation and Eucharist more visible.

In *Developmental Disabilities and Sacramental Access: New Paradigms for Sacramental Encounter*, Father Paul J. Wadell, C.P. explains: “Questions about who should receive [the sacraments] are answered not through our own sense of appropriateness but by discerning the overriding intention of God. The question is not whom do we invite to fellowship with Christ, but who is God seeking.”

RELATED WORDS

Confirmation | Eucharist | Original Sin

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What is Baptism?

Too often, **Baptism** is imagined as “blessed insurance” for the afterlife. Yet the church doesn't teach that **Baptism** gets us into heaven nor does it slam the door on the unbaptized. If not a guarantee of salvation, then what does **Baptism** do? In Saint Paul's theology, **Baptism** unites us with Christ, imbues us with the Spirit, and makes us church. Deep respect for this sacrament includes not re-baptizing Protestants who join us in full communion.

Bathing rituals have an ancient legacy. Before the gospel era, converts were received into Judaism through circumcision, **Baptism**, and Temple sacrifice. The **Baptism** of John explicitly added repentance to the rite. John's **Baptism** was available to Jews and Gentiles alike and didn't make one Jewish—or Christian. Jesus accepts **Baptism** from John to identify himself with humanity's sin, which John is anxious to wash away. In our embrace of this sacrament, we identify ourselves with Christ in the conversion of heart, mind, and life. Close identification with Christ remains the work of a lifetime. **Baptism** inaugurates the journey.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* https://www.vocationnetwork.org/en/blog/questions_catholics_ask/2014/01/what_is_baptism

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

MEMORIAL OF SAINT MONICA (AUGUST 27)

Hope triumphs

Saint Monica is the patron saint of disappointing children. As wild and profligate as the eventual Saint Augustine, her son, was during most of Saint Monica's life, she did live to see him **baptized**. He eventually became one of the world's greatest Christian thinkers. Through all her child's misdeeds Saint Monica remained faithful and hopeful.

READINGS: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3A, 14-17; Matthew 23:23-26 (426) <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/082724.cfm>. “Our Lord Jesus Christ ... has given us ... good hope through his grace.”

FAITH IN ACTION

Like Saint Monica, witness Christian faith and hope, and perhaps it will inspire the young people in your life to do the same.