

## Baptism Jesus' & Your's

### Christ's Baptism

1223 All the Old Covenant prefigurations find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins his public life after having himself baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan.<sup>17</sup> After his resurrection Christ gives this mission to his apostles: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."<sup>18</sup>

1224 Our Lord voluntarily submitted himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to "fulfill all righteousness."<sup>19</sup> Jesus' gesture is a manifestation of his self-emptying.<sup>20</sup> The Spirit who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, and the Father revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son."<sup>21</sup>

1225 In his Passover Christ opened to all men the fountain of Baptism. He had already spoken of his Passion, which he was about to suffer in Jerusalem, as a "Baptism" with which he had to be baptized.<sup>22</sup> The blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life.<sup>23</sup> From then on, it is possible "to be born of water and the Spirit"<sup>24</sup> in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

See where you are baptized, see where Baptism comes from, if not from the cross of Christ, from his death. There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved.<sup>25</sup>

Place of Jesus' Baptism

The Jordan River

JESUS BAPTISM

God kissed Adam into Existence

Adam is given a Soul and is now Immortal

The SOUL Is Immortal

- "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."  
Genesis 2:7 The Soul will live forever!
- The Soul is Created Immediately by God. DNA

## YOUR BAPTISM

### The Waters of creation

- As We Enter The Church And Dip Our Fingers Into The Water!
- We Remember Our Baptism!

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### The Waters of creation

- The Baptismal Font!
- Where We Are Baptized As An Infant!
- Where Adults Are Baptized Who Have Completed The RCIA Process!

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Jesus did not sin but was baptized as an example for us.

You are baptized in order to remove the stain of original sin of Adam and Eve from your soul.

You are now protected from committing sin as you journey through life.

Your human spirit is now able to connect with the Holy Spirit on your journey.

## THE WATERS OF CREATION

- The Spirit Of God Moving Over The Face Of The Waters
- Noah & The Flood
- Parting Of The Red Sea
- Parting Of Jordan River
- Water Fonts At Each Door
- Baptismal Font

Catechism of the Catholic Church

## ARTICLE 1

### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),<sup>4</sup> and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."<sup>5</sup>

#### I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1214 This sacrament is called *Baptism*, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek *baptizein*) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature."<sup>6</sup>

1215 This sacrament is also called "*the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit*," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."<sup>7</sup>

1216 "This bath is called *enlightenment*, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding . . . ." <sup>8</sup> Having received in Baptism the Word, "the true light that enlightens every man," the person baptized has been "enlightened," he becomes a "son of light," indeed, he becomes "light" himself:<sup>9</sup>

Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift. . . . We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship.<sup>10</sup>

## II. BAPTISM IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

### Prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Covenant

1217 In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, during the *blessing of the baptismal water*, the Church solemnly commemorates the great events in salvation history that already prefigured the mystery of Baptism:

Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs,  
which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power.

In Baptism we use your gift of water,  
which you have made a rich symbol  
of the grace you give us in this sacrament.<sup>11</sup>

1218 Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature, has been the source of life and fruitfulness. Sacred Scripture sees it as "overshadowed" by the Spirit of God:<sup>12</sup>

At the very dawn of creation  
your Spirit breathed on the waters,  
making them the wellspring of all holiness.<sup>13</sup>

1219 The Church has seen in Noah's ark a prefiguring of salvation by Baptism, for by it "a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water":<sup>1</sup>

The waters of the great flood  
you made a sign of the waters of Baptism,

that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.<sup>15</sup>

1220 If water springing up from the earth symbolizes life, the water of the sea is a symbol of death and so can represent the mystery of the cross. By this symbolism Baptism signifies communion with Christ's death.

1221 But above all, the crossing of the Red Sea, literally the liberation of Israel from the slavery of Egypt, announces the liberation wrought by Baptism:

You freed the children of Abraham from the slavery of Pharaoh, bringing them dry-shod through the waters of the Red Sea, to be an image of the people set free in Baptism.<sup>16</sup>

1222 Finally, Baptism is prefigured in the crossing of the Jordan River by which the People of God received the gift of the land promised to Abraham's descendants, an image of eternal life. The promise of this blessed inheritance is fulfilled in the New Covenant.

Confirmation

Confirming Your Baptism

CONFIRMATION

Celebration of Baptism in the Church

Baptism in the Church

1226 From the very day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered holy Baptism. Indeed St. Peter declares to the crowd astounded by his preaching: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."<sup>26</sup> The apostles and their collaborators offer Baptism to anyone who believed in Jesus: Jews, the God-fearing, pagans.<sup>27</sup> Always, Baptism is seen as connected with faith: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household," St. Paul declared to his jailer in Philippi. And the narrative continues, the jailer "was baptized at once, with all his family."<sup>28</sup>

1227 According to the Apostle Paul, the believer enters through Baptism into communion with Christ's death, is buried with him, and rises with him:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.<sup>29</sup>

The baptized have "put on Christ."<sup>30</sup> Through the Holy Spirit, Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies, and sanctifies.<sup>31</sup>

1228 Hence Baptism is a bath of water in which the "imperishable seed" of the Word of God produces its life-giving effect.<sup>32</sup> St. Augustine says of Baptism: "The word is brought to the material element, and it becomes a sacrament."<sup>33</sup>

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This sacrament is called *Confirmation* because the faith given in Baptism is now confirmed and made strong. Sometimes, those who benefit from Confirmation are referred to as *soldiers of Christ*. This isn't a military designation but a spiritual duty to fight the war between good and evil, light and darkness — a war between the human race and all the powers of hell.

Confirmation means accepting responsibility for your faith and destiny. Childhood is a time when you're told what to do, and you react positively to reward and negatively to punishment. Adulthood, even young adulthood, means that you must do what's right on your own, not for the recognition or reward but merely because it's the right thing to do. The focus is on the Holy Spirit, who confirmed the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4) and gave them courage to practice their faith. Catholics believe that the same Holy Spirit confirms Catholics during the Sacrament of Confirmation and gives them the same gifts and fruits.

## ARTICLE 2

### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.<sup>89</sup> For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."<sup>90</sup>

#### I. CONFIRMATION IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

1286 In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission.<sup>91</sup> The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.<sup>92</sup> He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him "without measure."<sup>93</sup>

1287 This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*.<sup>94</sup> On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit,<sup>95</sup> a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost.<sup>96</sup> Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age.<sup>97</sup> Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.<sup>98</sup>

1288 "From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."<sup>99</sup>

1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (*chrism*) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name "Christian," which means "anointed" and derives from that of Christ himself whom God "anointed with the Holy Spirit."<sup>100</sup> This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament *Chrismation*, anointing with chrism, or *myron* which means "chrism." In the West, the term *Confirmation* suggests that this sacrament both confirms and strengthens baptismal grace.

### III. THE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";<sup>117</sup>
- it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;<sup>118</sup>

- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:<sup>119</sup>

Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.<sup>120</sup>

1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark*, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.<sup>121</sup>

1305 This "character" perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi Ex officio*)."<sup>122</sup>

Penance

Conversion-Confession-Forgiveness-Reconciliation

Sacrament of Penance

- ◆ It is called the *sacrament of Penance*, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

Sacrament of Conversion

- ◆ It is called the *sacrament of conversion* because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.

Sacrament of Confession

- ◆ It is called the *sacrament of Confession*, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" -acknowledgement and praise-of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

Sacrament of Forgiveness

- ◆ It is called the *sacrament of Forgiveness*, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."
- ◆ The Our Father: Forgive us as we forgive others!

Sacrament of Reconciliation

- ◆ It is called the *sacrament of Reconciliation*, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's

merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go, first be reconciled to your brother."

#### GRACE

- ◆ God's
- ◆ Riches
- ◆ At
- ◆ Christ's
- ◆ Expense

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#### ARTICLE 4

#### THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1422 "Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion."<sup>4</sup>

##### I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1423 It is called the *sacrament of conversion* because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father<sup>5</sup> from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the *sacrament of Penance*, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

1424 It is called the *sacrament of confession*, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" - acknowledgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

It is called the *sacrament of forgiveness*, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."<sup>6</sup>

It is called the *sacrament of Reconciliation*, because it imparts to the sinner the live of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God."<sup>7</sup> He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."<sup>8</sup>

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##### II. WHY A SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AFTER BAPTISM?

1425 "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."<sup>9</sup> One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the degree to which sin is excluded for him who has "put on Christ."<sup>10</sup> But the apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."<sup>11</sup> And the Lord himself taught us to pray:



"Forgive us our trespasses,"<sup>12</sup> linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.

1426 *Conversion* to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish."<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls *concupiscence*, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.<sup>14</sup> This is the struggle of *conversion* directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.<sup>15</sup>

### III. THE CONVERSION OF THE BAPTIZED

1427 Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."<sup>16</sup> In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism<sup>17</sup> that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.

1428 Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal."<sup>18</sup> This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.<sup>19</sup>

1429 St. Peter's conversion after he had denied his master three times bears witness to this. Jesus' look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter and, after the Lord's resurrection, a threefold affirmation of love for him.<sup>20</sup> The second conversion also has a *communitarian* dimension, as is clear in the Lord's call to a whole Church: "Repent!"<sup>21</sup>

St. Ambrose says of the two conversions that, in the Church, "there are water and tears: the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance."<sup>22</sup>

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### IV. INTERIOR PENANCE

1430 Jesus' call to conversion and penance, like that of the prophets before him, does not aim first at outward works, "sackcloth and ashes," fasting and mortification, but at the *conversion of the heart, interior conversion*. Without this,

such penances remain sterile and false; however, interior conversion urges expression in visible signs, gestures and works of penance.<sup>23</sup>

1431 Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus* (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart).<sup>24</sup>

1432 The human heart is heavy and hardened. God must give man a new heart.<sup>25</sup> Conversion is first of all a work of the grace of God who makes our hearts return to him: "Restore us to thyself, O LORD, that we may be restored!"<sup>26</sup> God gives us the strength to begin anew. It is in discovering the greatness of God's love that our heart is shaken by the horror and weight of sin and begins to fear offending God by sin and being separated from him. The human heart is converted by looking upon him whom our sins have pierced:<sup>27</sup>

Let us fix our eyes on Christ's blood and understand how precious it is to his Father, for, poured out for our salvation it has brought to the whole world the grace of repentance.

1433 Since Easter, the Holy Spirit has proved "the world wrong about sin,"<sup>29</sup> i.e., proved that the world has not believed in him whom the Father has sent. But this same Spirit who brings sin to light is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace for repentance and conversion.<sup>30</sup>

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V. THE MANY FORMS OF PENANCE IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

1434 The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, *fasting*, *prayer*, and *almsgiving*,<sup>31</sup> which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: effort at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins."<sup>32</sup>

1435 Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right,<sup>33</sup> by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.<sup>34</sup>

1436 *Eucharist and Penance*. Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. "It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins."<sup>35</sup>

1437 Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Our Father - every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of our sins.

1438 *The seasons and days of penance* in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.<sup>36</sup> These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

1439 *The process of conversion and repentance* was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father:<sup>37</sup> the fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy - all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life - pure worthy, and joyful - of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart Of Christ Who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way.

## VI. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1440 Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.<sup>38</sup>

Only God forgives sin

1441 Only God forgives sins.<sup>39</sup> Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven."<sup>40</sup> Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.<sup>41</sup>

1442 Christ has willed that in her prayer and life and action his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood. But he entrusted the exercise of the power of absolution to the apostolic ministry which he charged with the "ministry of reconciliation."<sup>42</sup> The apostle is sent out "on behalf of Christ" with "God making his appeal" through him and pleading: "Be reconciled to God."<sup>43</sup>

Reconciliation with the Church

1443 During his public life Jesus not only forgave sins, but also made plain the effect of this forgiveness: he reintegrated forgiven sinners into the community of the People of God from which sin had alienated or even excluded them. A remarkable sign of this is the fact that Jesus receives sinners at his table, a gesture that expresses in an astonishing way both God's forgiveness and the return to the bosom of the People of God.<sup>44</sup>

1444 In imparting to his apostles his own power to forgive sins the Lord also gives them the authority to reconcile sinners with the Church. This ecclesial dimension of their task is expressed most notably in Christ's solemn words to Simon Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."<sup>45</sup> "The office of binding and loosing which was given to Peter was also assigned to the college of the apostles united to its head."<sup>46</sup>

1445 The words *bind and loose* mean: whomever you exclude from your communion, will be excluded from communion with God; whomever you receive anew into your communion, God will welcome back into his. *Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.*

### *The sacrament of forgiveness*

1446 Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as "the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace."<sup>47</sup>

1447 Over the centuries the concrete form in which the Church has exercised this power received from the Lord has varied considerably. During the first centuries the reconciliation of Christians who had committed particularly grave sins after their Baptism (for example, idolatry, murder, or adultery) was tied to a very rigorous discipline, according to which penitents had to do public penance for their sins, often for years, before receiving reconciliation. To this "order of

penitents" (which concerned only certain grave sins), one was only rarely admitted and in certain regions only once in a lifetime. During the seventh century Irish missionaries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental Europe the "private" practice of penance, which does not require public and prolonged completion of penitential works before reconciliation with the Church. From that time on, the sacrament has been performed in secret between penitent and priest. This new practice envisioned the possibility of repetition and so opened the way to a regular frequenting of this sacrament. It allowed the forgiveness of grave sins and venial sins to be integrated into one sacramental celebration. In its main lines this is the form of penance that the Church has practiced down to our day.

1448 Beneath the changes in discipline and celebration that this sacrament has undergone over the centuries, the same *fundamental structure* is to be discerned. It comprises two equally essential elements: on the one hand, the acts of the man who undergoes conversion through the action of the Holy Spirit: namely, contrition, confession, and satisfaction; on the other, God's action through the intervention of the Church. The Church, who through the bishop and his priests forgives sins in the name of Jesus Christ and determines the manner of satisfaction, also prays for the sinner and does penance with him. Thus the sinner is healed and re-established in ecclesial communion.

1449 The formula of absolution used in the Latin Church expresses the essential elements of this sacrament: the Father of mercies is the source of all forgiveness. He effects the reconciliation of sinners through the Passover of his Son and the gift of his Spirit, through the prayer and ministry of the Church:

God, the Father of mercies,  
 through the death and the resurrection of his Son  
 has reconciled the world to himself  
 and sent the Holy Spirit among us  
 for the forgiveness of sins;  
 through the ministry of the Church  
 may God give you pardon and peace,  
 and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of  
 the Holy Spirit.<sup>48</sup>

Anointing

Of the Sick-Jesus the Physician

Catechism of the Catholic Church

ARTICLE 5

THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1499 "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he

may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ."<sup>98</sup>

#### I. ITS FOUNDATIONS IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

##### Illness in human life

1500 Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, man experiences his powerlessness, his limitations, and his finitude. Every illness can make us glimpse death.

1501 Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him.

##### The sick person before God

1502 The man of the Old Testament lives his sickness in the presence of God. It is before God that he laments his illness, and it is of God, Master of life and death, that he implores healing.<sup>99</sup> Illness becomes a way to conversion; God's forgiveness initiates the healing.<sup>100</sup> It is the experience of Israel that illness is mysteriously linked to sin and evil, and that faithfulness to God according to his law restores life: "For I am the Lord, your healer."<sup>101</sup> The prophet intuits that suffering can also have a redemptive meaning for the sins of others.<sup>102</sup> Finally Isaiah announces that God will usher in a time for Zion when he will pardon every offense and heal every illness.<sup>103</sup>

##### Christ the physician

1503 Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people"<sup>104</sup> and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins;<sup>105</sup> he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.<sup>106</sup> His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick and you visited me."<sup>107</sup> His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

1504 Often Jesus asks the sick to believe.<sup>108</sup> He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands,<sup>109</sup> mud and washing.<sup>110</sup> The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from him and healed them all."<sup>111</sup> And so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

1505 Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."<sup>112</sup> But he did not heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through his Passover. On the cross Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away the "sin of the world,"<sup>113</sup> of which illness is only a consequence. By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion.

"Heal the sick . . ."

1506 Christ invites his disciples to follow him by taking up their cross in their turn.<sup>114</sup> By following him they acquire a new outlook on illness and the sick. Jesus associates them with his own life of poverty and service. He makes them share in his ministry of compassion and healing: "So they went out and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them."<sup>115</sup>

1507 The risen Lord renews this mission ("In my name . . . they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."<sup>116</sup>) and confirms it through the signs that the Church performs by invoking his name.<sup>117</sup> These signs demonstrate in a special way that Jesus is truly "God who saves."<sup>118</sup>

1508 The Holy Spirit gives to some a special charism of healing<sup>119</sup> so as to make manifest the power of the grace of the risen Lord. But even the most intense prayers do not always obtain the healing of all illnesses. Thus St. Paul must learn from the Lord that "my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness," and that the sufferings to be endured can mean that "in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his Body, that is, the Church."<sup>120</sup>

1509 "Heal the sick!"<sup>121</sup> The Church has received this charge from the Lord and strives to carry it out by taking care of the sick as well as by accompanying them with her prayer of intercession. She believes in the life-giving presence of Christ, the physician of souls and bodies. This presence is particularly active through the sacraments, and in an altogether special way through the Eucharist, the bread that gives eternal life and that St. Paul suggests is connected with bodily health.<sup>122</sup>

1510 However, the apostolic Church has its own rite for the sick, attested to by St. James: "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders [*presbyters*] of the Church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and

if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven."<sup>123</sup> Tradition has recognized in this rite one of the seven sacraments.<sup>124</sup>

A sacrament of the sick

1511 The Church believes and confesses that among the seven sacraments there is one especially intended to strengthen those who are being tried by illness, the Anointing of the Sick:

This sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ our Lord as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to indeed by Mark, but is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the apostle and brother of the Lord.<sup>125</sup>

1512 From ancient times in the liturgical traditions of both East and West, we have testimonies to the practice of anointings of the sick with blessed oil. Over the centuries the Anointing of the Sick was conferred more and more exclusively on those at the point of death. Because of this it received the name "Extreme Unction." Notwithstanding this evolution the liturgy has never failed to beg the Lord that the sick person may recover his health if it would be conducive to his salvation.<sup>126</sup>

1513 The Apostolic Constitution *Sacram unktionem infirmorum*,<sup>127</sup> following upon the Second Vatican Council,<sup>128</sup> established that henceforth, in the Roman Rite, the following be observed:

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is given to those who are seriously ill by anointing them on the forehead and hands with duly blessed oil - pressed from olives or from other plants - saying, only once: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."<sup>129</sup>

## II. WHO RECEIVES AND WHO ADMINISTERS THIS SACRAMENT?

In case of grave illness . . .

1514 The Anointing of the Sick "is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived."<sup>130</sup>

1515 If a sick person who received this anointing recovers his health, he can in the case of another grave illness receive this sacrament again. If during the same illness the person's condition becomes more serious, the sacrament may be



repeated. It is fitting to receive the Anointing of the Sick just prior to a serious operation. The same holds for the elderly whose frailty becomes more pronounced. ". . . let him call for the presbyters of the Church"

1516 Only priests (bishops and presbyters) are ministers of the Anointing of the Sick.<sup>131</sup> It is the duty of pastors to instruct the faithful on the benefits of this sacrament. The faithful should encourage the sick to call for a priest to receive this sacrament. The sick should prepare themselves to receive it with good dispositions, assisted by their pastor and the whole ecclesial community, which is invited to surround the sick in a special way through their prayers and fraternal attention.