

### HANDOUT: The Gospel of John chapter 3

*In truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit... John 3:3*

Some other passages in Scripture concerning the Sacrament of Baptism:

- Matthew 28:19-20: Jesus said, *“Go therefore, 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. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of the age.”*
- Mark 16:16: Jesus said, *“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*
- Acts 2:38: St. Peter told the Jews and Israelites who had come from all over the known world to Jerusalem for the Sinai Covenant Feast of Pentecost [Feast of Weeks] who cried out to him to tell them what they must do to be saved [Acts 2:37], *“You must repent, Peter answered, and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*
- Titus 3:5-7: St. Paul writing to Bishop Titus: *“...it was not because of any upright actions we had done ourselves; it was for no reason except his own faithful love that he saved us, by means of the cleansing water of rebirth and renewal in the Holy Spirit which he has so generously poured over us through Jesus Christ our Savior; so that, justified by his grace, we should become heirs in hope of eternal life.”*
- Romans 6:3-4: *“You cannot have forgotten that all of us, when we were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death. So by our baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glorious power, we too should begin living a new life.”*
- Colossians 2:12-13: *“You have been buried with him by your baptism; by which, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and uncircumcised in body: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us every one of our sins.”*
- 1 Peter 3:18-22: *“Christ himself died once and for all for sins, the upright for the sake of the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. They refused to believe long ago, while God patiently waited to receive them, in Noah’s time when the ark was being built. In it only a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water. **It is the baptism corresponding to this water which saves you now**—not a washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience given to God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God’s right hand, with angels, ruling forces and powers subject to him.”*

[also see Galatians 6:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17].

In the beginning of our lives we are made as creatures, fashioned after God’s own image, made **in** His image, but we are still creatures none the less. Christ is the eternal Son who is begotten of the Father. He **is** the image of the Father while we are created **in** the image

of the Father. In the New Creation, Christ gives to us, through His own life, re-birth into permanent sonship. In 1 John 1:3 John writes: *You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God’s children—**which is what we are!***” We are not longer just called Children of God by virtue of being part of His creation. We ARE children of God by virtue of the blood of Christ which unites us in our re-birth, *anathen-* from above, to God as His children. **This is the most distinctive feature of Christianity and the most distinctive feature of Catholicism.** It is what Pope Pius XI expressed when he said: *“Ours is a religion of Divine Sonship. We are made partakers of the divine nature.”* See CCC# 1994-5

St Peter writes in 2 Peter 3-4 *“By his divine power, he has lavished on us all the things we need for life and for true devotion, through the knowledge of him who has called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these, the greatest and priceless promises have been lavished on us, **that through them you should share the divine nature** and escape the corruption rife in the world through disordered passion.”*

God’s grace *“is a participation in the life of God”* [CCC# 1997] through which we receive the gift of divine son-ship and by His grace we are justified. Catholic Christians define justification as that which has been merited for us by Christ’s passion on the cross. Like conversion, justification has two aspects: Moved by grace we turn away from sin and to God and in doing so we accept forgiveness and righteousness in our transformed souls which as been infused by the Holy Spirit with the very life of Christ. Justification includes the remission of our sins, sanctification, and the renewal of the inner man, which is for us an on-going process in our life long journey toward salvation. CCC#1996 *“Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.”* [see John 1:12-18; 17:3; Romans 8:14-17; 2Peter 1:3-4].

CCC #1992: *“Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the Sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life....”* [See Romans 3:21-26].

7 statements John the Baptist gives concerning Jesus’ true nature and mission:

Verse 31	He comes from heaven = He is divine
Verse 32	His testimony will be rejected
Verse 34	He speaks God’s own words
Verse 34	He is filled with God’s Spirit without limit
Verse 35	He is God’s Son
Verse 36	Whoever believes in His has eternal life
Verse 36	Anyone who does not believe in Christ has no life