

and Chrismation, along with the Eucharist, we are united to Christ. In him we become heirs of divine life, bearers of the Holy Spirit, who reveals to us the full truth of Christ. The Spirit leads us along the paths of Christ's commandments and prays within us: "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15). Through these Holy Mysteries we become members of the Body of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

410 In his conversation with Nicodemus, Christ speaks of the inauguration of the new life as a process of being "born anew" or "from above" (see Jn 3:3). This new birth is a birth "of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Performed by water in the liturgical rite, it becomes a reality through the Holy Spirit's power. Baptism is for us the beginning of the fullness of life for which we were created:

John preached a baptism of repentance and the whole of Judea went out to him. The Lord proclaims a baptism of the adoption of sons. Among those who place their hope in [the Lord], who will not obey? The baptism of John was preliminary, that of Jesus a crowning accomplishment. The baptism of John was a break with sin; that of Jesus was union with God.³⁰⁸

In Baptism, God not only saves us from sin, but also grants us the inestimable treasures of new life.

2) Baptism Is Dying and Rising in Christ

411 In order to make us partakers of divine life, and to enable us to live by the freedom of God's children, Christ frees us from the bondage of sin. We had descended into this slavery through the fall of Adam and our own sins. Having taken the sin of the world upon himself, Christ also accepted the ultimate consequence of this sin, which is death. But he overcame it by the death he freely accepted on the cross. In Baptism, Christ makes us partakers of his victory over sin and death.

412 Our entry into new life also begins with our dying to sin (see Rom 6:2), which is a dying with Christ. But this dying culminates in our rising with him: "Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom 6:4). Through his Death and Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, Christ has led us into divine life. We enter into this life through our death and resurrection in Christ and by receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only through the death of the "old self" can one become a "new person"—a "new creation" in Christ (see 2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:9-10; Gal 6:15).

³⁰⁸ BASIL THE GREAT, Homily 13, Protreptic on Holy Baptism, 1: PG 31, 425.

3) *Our Baptism Is "the Blessing of the Jordan"*

413 In the Rite of Baptism, the Church prays that "the grace of salvation and the blessing of the Jordan"³⁰⁹ descend upon the water. We pray that in this Baptism, that which was revealed at the river Jordan will be realized now. There, the Father, through the Holy Spirit, declared Jesus to be his beloved Son. That which was manifested in Christ—being the Son of God—becomes the reality of all who are baptized.

Upon you also, if you possess sincere piety, the Holy Spirit will descend, and from above will be heard over you the voice of the Father, saying not "This is my Son" but "this has now become my son." For to Christ alone belongs the "is" ... To you belongs "has now become," since you do not possess the sonship by nature but receive it by adoption. He is Son eternally, but you receive that grace by advancement.³¹⁰

414 Baptism is the first Mystery that a person needs to receive in order to enter the Church, the ark of salvation. It is the means by which one becomes a member of the Church, the Body of Christ. "Whence is it that we are Christians? Through our faith would be the universal answer. And in what way are we saved? Plainly because we were regenerated through the grace given in our baptism."³¹¹ Baptism unlocks the access to the other Holy Mysteries and sacred rites in the Church through which the Lord sanctifies, vivifies, and leads his Church as a whole and each believer in particular. This is why the baptized already become "heirs of the kingdom" and receive the "blessedness of the saints."³¹²

4) *One Baptism for the Remission of Sins*

415 In Baptism a person receives remission of all sins: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20). Having been united to Christ and having become a temple of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is freed from enslavement to sin and death through the action of divine grace. He or she becomes capable of growing into the likeness of God. Divine filiation and the capacity for divine likeness through Christ in the Holy Spirit is given to the baptized person once and for all. That is why this Mystery can be received only once in a lifetime. Even after Baptism, however, the person who is not yet tempered in choosing what is good, is inclined to sin. Therefore, one turns to the Mystery of Repentance. In

³⁰⁹ Trebnyk, Rite of Baptism, the Litany of Peace.

³¹⁰ CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, *The Catechetical Lectures*, 3, 14: PG 33, 444-445.

³¹¹ BASIL THE GREAT, *On the Holy Spirit*, 10, 26: PG 32, 113.

³¹² Trebnyk, Rite of Baptism, The Prayer of Exorcism.