

## BAPTISM OF A BABY IS A BIG DEAL

The Roman Catholic Church claims that sprinkling water on a baby or an adult while saying, "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" does amazing things. It takes away the sin we are born with, original sin, and any other sins and grafts us on to Jesus making us his servants. It puts Jesus and God inside us to live in us and inspire us. The Church says that baptism heals the inclination towards sin that original sin causes. Baptism is a sacrament. It pictures cleansing from sin and the effects of sin and actually does what it pictures.

Baptism is about a state or condition not an action. Baptism is understood as vaccination against sin infection. Vaccination involves an injection but is not about an injection. It is about a condition. That is why baptism needs to be seen as a big deal not just a party not a rite or ceremony.

The meaning of baptism is drowning your sinner side or sinner self in the water and rising from the water as a forgiven and renewed and reborn person. Baptism is drowning the sinner so it implies Christianity really knows what sin is and baptism is serious business. The sprinkling of water may not look like it intends the drowning meaning but it does.

The drowning and the way baptism is a statement of faith in the violent death and resurrection of Jesus and embracing what that evil has allegedly done for you are sufficient reasons for taking it very seriously. Take it seriously enough to condemn it vehemently and have nothing to do with it.

Lazy interpretations of baptism - its just a culture thing or a rite etc - do not wash. It is not up to you to decide what baptism means.

## THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Baptism, in Catholic teaching, makes one part of the one true Church - the Roman Catholic Church.

A baby if a member can only be considered a passive member. This implies that passive matters more than active and that raises moral issues. It is more about headcounting than a person being a true active member. A passive member of anything is not much of a member if he or she can be called a member at all! There is something abhorrent about a baby being classed a passive member of the Communist Party so we should be against this even if it is the Catholic Church - a social political entity which is more about those two areas than faith or God. The core demands of Christianity as laid down by Jesus according to the Bible are willingness even to die for Jesus and the religion (I wrote religion not the people). Passive membership totally maligns that ethos.

If religious freedom is a right, then it refers chiefly to the right of any person to create a religious identity with doctrines and rules which set up that identity and demark it from other identities. That is where the trouble lies. It should be described as a privilege not as a right. It is such a serious matter that any gimmicks such as baptising babies to give them an identity is a form of spiritual abuse. In truth the only label that is true is that you are human.

Most Catholics are baptised as babies. Though few become proper Catholics (and many like the Protestants pick out what they like out of the Christian faith the Church) baptism serves the Church well. It leads to people who do not believe but who underwent baptism into the Church being seen as Catholics. Because of them, there is a social structure through which the leaders can gain great prestige, wealth and influence. If more people left the Catholic structure the Church would get less say in the media and in the state. They may have left the faith in their hearts but the religio-political web is still there and they are part of it. The structure is kept up through parishes and Catholic schools. For cultural reasons, many get their babies baptised. Because a parish comprises enough people who are baptised Catholic, it will still keep going even if only one person attends worship every Sunday. The presence of the baptised in the locality is enough to keep the chapel open and the parish in existence.

If you were baptised Catholic, as long as you get your babies baptised and invite them to attend Church when they get older and give it money you are complicit in the wrongdoing and superstition of the Church. And you are making them as bad as yourself.

What if you feel you could get your baby baptised in case baptism is necessary for Heaven? You might not believe but part of you might be scared. You will tell yourself, "Why not? No religion, nobody, knows all the religious answers with 100 per cent certainty anyway." But that is not a reason to get the baby baptised - it is an excuse. If is not clear enough that baptism saves the child, no decent God will make the child suffer if it is not baptised. Smarter people than you say the threat to the unbaptised is merely nonsense. And why aren't you thinking that baptism puts power into a child and it could be some kind

of arcane harmful power? The Book of Mormon says infant baptism is an abomination. Islam says it implies opposition to the truth that instead of being baptised we need to work on believing in God and that Muhammad is his prophet.

Baptism is said to remove the divine ban on the child from entering Heaven to enjoy everlasting happiness there with God. It is said to do away with the weakness that inclines us to sin. It puts the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It puts the gift of faith in the baby. The baby will grow up to be a believer - unless he or she resists - and is called to be a saint through baptism. All that is serious stuff.

In Catholic teaching, baptism confers the new birth. The Catholic who does not believe this cannot call himself a person of Catholic faith or a true believer. According to Pius XII, he is not a Catholic anymore.

Dignity is seen as a gift from God and dignity is given in baptism too. Baptismal new birth/regeneration is linked to the notion of God making man in his own image. The baby becomes the icon of God in baptism. The unbaptised is an image of God in a sense but there is no qualification in how the baptised person images God. The unbaptised being the image of God is so vague that it is meaningless and as good as saying the unbaptised is nothing to God at all.

## BORN AGAIN

Baptism is said to be a big deal because it spiritually changes the baby and is an essential for fitting the baby for Heaven. Babies prior to baptism are thought to be in such a spiritual condition that it is as if they are guilty of sin and this is because they are contaminated as a result of the sin Adam, the first man committed when he ate the forbidden fruit. Though they never actually sinned, they are in the same condition as if they did. This is called original sin. The baby then comes into existence spiritually lifeless and spiritually dead. The baby stays that way until baptism. The central idea and central motive for why Catholics baptise babies is so that the baby may be reborn, regenerated or born again. The terms all refer to the same thing. This new birth is compared to natural birth. With natural birth, you come into the world. With the new birth you have a birth as well. This is birth into a life with God. The Church says this new birth is the most important one. When you think about it, the meaning of baptism is extremely insulting and arrogant. The new birth doctrine outlines the difference between the baptised and the unbaptised as being the same as the difference between day and night.

The difference is not in the life the baptised have to live as in going to Catholic school and living as a Catholic but spiritual. A person mistakenly thought to have been baptised could live as a Catholic but would not be a real one. A person should feel very very uncomfortable about these vicious doctrines of the new birth. Such teaching pretends that something that isn't very important is of extreme importance. Few parents would feel that way. They have baptism performed to imitate everybody else. They will see no difference between their baptised child and the unbaptised Muslim child next door. They have to insult their intelligence to serve the Church and pretend there is a dramatic difference. The Muslim will be slandered as bad and dangerous and the baptised as good.

## BAPTISM IS THE ULTIMATE STEP NOT JUST A BIG ONE

The Catholic Church considers baptism to be a big step. Its even more important than marriage. The Church says that the sacrament of marriage is only possible if the man and woman have been baptised. The Catholic Church sees baptism as the new birth. Its changing the person so much that its like they are born again. It uses John 3:5 to prove that. When having a chat with Nicodemus, Jesus claimed that only a person born of water and the Holy Spirit could go to Heaven, "Unless a man is born of water and [even] the Spirit, he cannot [ever] enter the Kingdom of God". If you care for your baby and you feel that baptism is spiritually nothing special and not a radical change and that baptised people and unbaptised are no better or worse than each other then you cannot invite him to pretend that undergoing it did him any unusual spiritual good. And you are affirming that you will invite him to do that when you tell him about his baptism.

As baptism removes sin, it is supposed to unite your soul with God. Thus you belong to him and he to you. There are no rights without responsibilities. Baptism lays religious responsibilities on you. You must obey what God teaches through scripture and the Church. Baptism is based on scripture and Church authority. So to get baptised implies acceptance of their authority and veracity. Baptism is an oath. God and his people have taken an oath based on, "You will be my people and I will be your God". It is a two-way oath. The Church requires an oath of commitment from baptised babies before they know to what they are committing. That is outrageous... but it means that baptism is serious stuff. Atheists and believers alike must recognise that. It would be like perjury to take your baby to get baptised while having no intention of taking the infant's obligations as a result of baptism seriously.

The Church says that some sins are very serious because they are an attempt to break your marriage relationship with God that was enacted at baptism. It points to Ephesians 5:31-32 which speaks of this intimate relationship with God thus indicating that serious sin is as bad as adultery (page 68 Apologia, Catholic Answers to Today's Questions, Holden and Pinsent, Catholic Truth Society, London). The Church holds that baptism is the wedding ceremony and your life after is the marriage.

## THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE VOWS AND OBLIGATIONS

The Church claims that when you were baptised as a baby you were made a member of the Church and obligated to obey its Bible and its God and its popes for all eternity. This claim is very vindictive. If there is indeed an obligation, the Church has to hope that you will suffer if you fail to keep it.

Obligations mean things you have to do on pain of being condemned as an immoral person worthy of suffering punishment. Any obligation with no punishment is not an obligation at all. Religion cannot prove religious obligations to be real. You need proof before you have the right to make obligations for people.

The Church claims it is not vindictive but wants those who do not do their duties to repent. But that is admitting that it is vindictive towards those who do not repent. Oh the hypocrisy! And inventing more obligations than is necessary is intrinsically vindictive.

It is far more vindictive to say people should be punished for breaking the vows made for them to be faithful to the Church than it is to say they should be punished for vows they made themselves as adults. Parents need to ponder this stuff before considering getting their babies baptised.

Baptism needs to be declared null and void and incapable of conferring fair and just obligations. Annuling is not an option. It's an obligation.

## THE COMMAND TO BAPTISE

No genuinely good person commands what they have no right to command. Yet we have the Christian God and the Christian Church commanding people to have babies baptised. Its just paying homage to interference and authoritarianism. Why? Because we lived for millions of years without baptism. We do not need it like we need food. Therefore there is no right to command it.

## NO BETTER THAN RACISM

Canon 208 of the Code of Canon Law states that all Christians are equal by virtue of their baptism. That undeniably makes the rite an initiation into something that is just as bad as racism. It tells us that we are not equal as human beings whether we are baptised Christians or not. It tells us that the unbaptised should not be treated as the equal of the baptised. The unbaptised infant should not get the same care as the baptised should. All this tells us that the doctrine is very very serious indeed. People are blind to that for they tend to think that one faith is as good as another and look on Christianity with a huge degree of apathy. The Canon follows the evil teaching of *Lumen Gentium*, a Vatican II document, which teaches that baptism makes Christians equal. The equality is said to rule out any possibility of any Christian claiming a monopoly on grace and holiness.

## ERROR AND BAPTISM

Error is worse than being evil because at least the evil person sees they are bad. The person in error does not see the damage he or she can do or does. If religion is fiction, then the rights of the unbeliever come first. Usually the unbeliever is bullied into agreeing to the baptism on the basis that if the religion is rubbish then the ceremony is nothing more than a sprinkle of water. Nobody thinks that the unbeliever might want to show integrity and not be showing disrespect to religious people by putting on a performance.

## THE SCHOOLS

Catholic schools require that pupils must be baptised. For a lot of Catholics, their main concern is to have the baby baptised as a prerequisite for having the child enrolled in a Catholic school later on. Instead of having the guts and the courage to insist that this rule is discriminatory the parents go along with it. If Catholic education is a good thing, it should be provided to children that may become Catholics and who have Catholic parents and not just to the baptised. The rule is a disgraceful attempt by Catholic bishops and priests to interfere in families and in what is none of their business. They resort to such tactics to force parents to make their babies members of the Church.

## BAPTISM AND SECULARISM

To have your baby baptised is to use him or her against secularism. Secularism does not care about God. Baptism is implicitly opposed to the rights society has won through secularism.

Moreover, Catholicism teaches that the Church and the state have different jobs to do, but that it is a sin to insist that Church and state must be separate. So baptism implies you must support the Church when it seeks political advantages or special favours from the state. The ideal state for the true Catholic is one that thinks like Catholics do.

More than other religions, Catholicism is a threat to the freedom of the state and the people.

## NOT TAKING BAPTISM SERIOUSLY

People don't take religion seriously these days and indeed many clergy don't. Few would get their babies baptised if Christianity lived up to its hard morality and lived like it says Jesus lived. So the faith thrives on disobedience. But that doesn't justify the child being enrolled in the religion. For all the child knows, he or she could be enrolled in the Nazis. For religion, if you enrolled a child in the Nazi party or the Labour Party for the child to be raised as one of these the Church would squeal that this is exploitation and the enrolment was devious and manipulative and seeking an unfair advantage by trying to step in and have the child conditioned when it is naturally prone to conditioning and gullible in learning about the world. The Church is a fine one to talk! It assumes baptism is not exploitation and yet it has the nerve to say that when any other religion does something similar it is exploitation! Infant baptism clearly seeks to demark the child from members of other religions and implies an insult to them. It invites the child into unfairness based on religion and into hypocrisy and superstition. Baptism is the superstition that if you undergo the rite with the right dispositions then you will have spiritual luck from God called grace. There is no difference between it in principle than carrying a rabbits foot. Carrying a rabbit's foot brings luck primarily by seeming to bring a spiritual sense of peace and security.

Those who get their children baptised usually do it because everybody else does it. They do it out of a respect for tradition. They may do it to respect the beliefs of their locality. Baptism doesn't respect the baby. Respecting the baby is more important. If everybody respected tradition there would be no progress in the world. Respecting beliefs and traditions is not about respecting them because they are true. Protestants may say for example that they have to respect the beliefs of Catholics despite not agreeing with them. Beliefs of small religions are not respected. If a small sect was advocating the sacrifice of goats this belief would get no respect. People only talk about respecting beliefs when the religion with the beliefs is very large and influential. This is unfair. A sect leader who commanded a woman to have an abortion would be excoriated while it is fine if a woman dies in pregnancy because of the pope's command that though the doctor told her to avoid getting pregnant and use contraception she must not heed him. To baptise out of respect for tradition is unfair and disgraceful. The ceremony is what matters to the participants and not the sacrament.

It is horrifying how people who believe that God sends unbaptised babies to Hell to burn forever to justly suffer for a sin they never committed would want to enter their child into a faith that teaches that and put them through a ceremony that expresses support for such an evil God. Such people are common enough among religious believers.

If you are forced by society to have your baby baptised a Catholic and you don't wish to, you could baptise the child outwardly yourself. If you withhold intention the baptism is invalid. Its no more valid than a baptism on a TV soap opera. Or you could simply use the words, "I baptise you in the name of the great force of all life". That would be invalid in the eyes of the Church. Keep a record. Doing the baptism yourself could really take off! The child later on can decide if he or she wants a real baptism or not.

## CONCLUSION

Baptism is a big deal. If you don't think it is, then respect your baby. Respect religious people and don't be a fake. Don't have the baby put through a ceremony that is meant to be a big deal when you think it isn't. Be sincere. If you don't think baptising your baby is a big deal then why bother? Why not let the baby grow up a bit to decide for herself or himself if she or he wishes to be baptised?