

# The doctrine that baptism gives indelible Catholic Church membership

A mark is just a mark. A mark cannot be a label - a label can only be put on it. Thus being marked Catholic cannot itself make you Catholic...

Argument: "Catholics say that being Catholic has a real, objective, and unalterable meaning. You cannot cease being Catholic any more than you can cease being human. They argue that in the same way a man cannot become a woman but after transsexual surgery ends up being only a female impersonator. For Catholics, the Church has to be a union of people. The Catholic Church is understood as union of faith, a union where people receive at least some of the same sacraments, particularly sacraments of initiation such as baptism, and a union of clerical government. Some say Catholicism is not a congregation. A free gift from God called grace unites members to him and each other even if they never meet one another. It denies that it is up to you to define yourself as a Catholic. It is not a religion of self-defining members but a religion of members who are defined by God. Grace constitutes you as a person in the Church or a member. This grace of becoming Catholic is given in baptism only. So the Catholic is not made a Catholic by anything but this grace. The human being ontologically and in reality becomes a Catholic at baptism. Ontological means what is, what is real. It is about being. The other things such as obeying the Church or believe all it says or attending its worship or becoming a priest or nun or even pope are what Catholics do but do not make you a Catholic. Once you are validly baptised even if not as a Catholic you are objectively defined as a member of the Church even if not an active one or one who is in communion with the Church. Just like being a family member, your membership of the Church is an objective and unalterable fact."

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1265 Baptism not only purifies from all sins but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted son of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature," member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.

We conclude that baptism changes you ontologically - it changes your essence and nature.

## Issues:

Baptismal grace changes what you are at the ceremony. If grace changes your essence then it turns you from one kind of person into another in the same way that an ape might be turned by grace into a person. But grace means gift and the person who is baptised supposedly gets transformed into a Catholic. But this gift does nothing to make you a better person. It is not a gift at all. The Bible teaching of grace rejects such an interpretation of grace as evil.

Over-labelling is a form of bigotry even if you do it to yourself. If you are a human being before baptism and become a Catholic human being after baptism then it follows you have to right to act or speak as a man or woman or Chinese or British person or even as a human being. You speak and act as a Catholic. Do not take baptism as a minor and trivial matter. In fact if baptism does nothing at all and has no miraculous power that is all the more reason for objecting to it. It is abusive to see a person being changed as a person by a rite if nothing happens. It is refusing to see their true nature and give it the honour due to it for the right reasons.

The Church says the change is radical which is why the change is referred to as being born again. But the change does nothing spectacular which is why it is clearly only in the head of the believers. I mean that baptised people are no holier or more interested in God than anybody unbaptised. Is it a change for the sake of a change without any concern for changing you as a person? Yes. The excuse offered by the Church is that God does not force you to obey even after baptism. But that still should not mean that people who are baptised and unbaptised should be much the same as people. If you give out bus tickets to thousands and nobody uses them then that is a proof that they are invalid. A change in your essence to make you a child of God would make you keep wanting peace with God even if you are estranged. A change of essence may change you but it also opens you up to certain influences that are relevant to the change. Essence is inseparably linked to what influences you are susceptible to. A pig's essence leads to his fondness for mud and a cats leads to her fondness for grooming.

The change even if it gives you God receptors or turns them on still has nothing to do specifically with making you Catholic. If something happens then Catholic is still the wrong word. If God wants all people in the Catholic Church that

still does not mean that all who get the God receptors are Catholic. It would mean they are called to be Catholic and form a Church and love the truth. It would mean they get prompts.

What about those who say you ontologically become Catholic at baptism? Why the word Catholic? Why not the word Christian? Why not the word spiritual? The doctrine is masking how the Catholic Church, a denomination, wants to force a denominational label on you. Baptism is seen as enabling you to be in union with God but it does not force you. It is like God fixing a birth defect except for the soul. Why all the stuff about labels then? Surely a label is too much if all that is happening is that baptism heals a birth defect.

If being baptised into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were said to ontologically make you a Mormon it would be obvious that this is about head counting and not about quality or spirituality or truth. If it were said to make you ontologically spiritual or in touch with God that would be different.

Grace is supposed to be a gift so how can an objective label being given to you by grace be a gift? It is not going to help you be a good child of God.

The notion that you are given a label ontologically forgets that if you are a plumber that describes what you do but not what you are in reality. Plumber is still a label. To say a person is ontologically the word Catholic is the ultimate in degrading labelling because a person is not and cannot be a concept or label. The person is objectified. The Church is making out that baptism gives you a permanent and all-defining identity. This is bigotry for getting a label does not in itself have anything to do with you getting an identity.

A religion that is formed by an ontological change at baptism that has nothing to do with influencing you to be good is not an ethical system in any sense. It may have an ethical system but that is insulted by being a mere accessory or extra. Those who say a religion at its core is an ontological label are admitting that at core it is not about goodness and is therefore bad and thus even if it tells you not to do bad things and you do them it is still to blame. The evil you do is more reflective of it than the good if the good is at all. Thus the religion is dodgy at its root and must take responsibility for the bad doings of its members even if the religion condemns their sins. The more bad members there are the more the religion is bad. When people think of religion they often mean an ethical system but not all religions really are ethical systems.

A religion that claims to ontologically change you into a member or child of God or whatever is automatically responsible for all you do good and bad for it takes that responsibility *even if no such change* takes place. The responsibility lies chiefly with the leaders and if parents choose to have you changed then it falls on them. We have seen a religion formed by a change that does nothing to incline you to be moral is bad and is to blame for the acts that its members do even against its will that do harm and deserves no credit for the good they do. Imagine what it would deserve for attempting to change you ontologically when nothing has happened. All this is too important for the way religion preaches it and has the cheek to present no solid evidence!

Why are you told that baptism ontologically makes you a Catholic but not an adopted child of God? The latter would be more religiously neutral and natural. The goal is just to force not a relationship with God on you but a label that describes a religious structure of faith and discipline. It is bigoted to do that and what if we start saying Communists are ontologically communists? They are not. To say baptism does an ontological labelling is to give others the permission to degrade themselves by making themselves about other labels. The Nazi is made out to be a Nazi not a human being.

A child that is adopted is not ontologically the child of the adoptive parents so how can we be ontologically adopted children of God? But that aside the idea that you become a member of a religious group ontologically is worse than saying you become a child of God ontologically!

If you sin and are not baptised then you are not ontologically an adopted child of God. But what if you are? Then your sins involve not just disrespecting God and your neighbour but a denial of what you are. So the punishment for a baptised person committing sin x would be worse than that for an unbaptised person committing sin x. The sin would be worse. Baptism then is intended to be harmful for the child will sin no doubt.

The doctrine that you are Catholic ontologically and forever means that if you go to Hell to be punished forever you remain Catholic forever. That means the Church exists in Hell and the Catholic Church is partly a communion of demons. It is obvious that there is something wrong with a religion that has too many evil people in it. Catholicism is the only religion that claims to have members who are ranting with hate and evil for all eternity...

There are no clear objective consequences of baptism so that a person who is not baptised may think they have been or a person who is baptised may see no results and think the baptism either did not happen or was not valid. There is far more objectifying of a person who is given a label that does not fit them or really describe them than there is for a person that seems to fit it better. The degradation is far worse.

There is nothing demonstrable in a physical sense. A man can be ontologically a fish if the physical has nothing to do with it. A living person can be spiritually ontologically dead.

Advantage:

The alleged advantage of believing that God makes you Catholic not you or anybody else is that it avoids the relativist doctrine that your religious identity comes from how you think and behave in society. So to change to a different religion is like leaving one club for another. But there is nothing relativist about that! A religion that is not about what you believe or do is not a religion at all but a label. The Catholic Church makes its most basic and core teaching about a label!! We all know we have to judge things for ourselves which is why even the one true religion should let members leave in the hope that one day the truth will sink in and they will come back. That is respect for conscience and patience and is not relativism.

We cannot condone the terrible implications of ontological labelling and baptism just over relativism. In fact the labelling is itself relativist anyway. Like relativism it thinks that you can magically turn the false into the true by using words.

Being Catholic does not mean you are necessarily in communion or good standing with the Church. Catholics make distinctions between how baptism gives you a mark as a Catholic and how you may still not be in communion with the Church. The soul is marked indelibly and forever. This mark cannot be just for the sake of a mark and must mean something. It must make a difference for eternal life and your connection with God. You are still part of the Church if you are out of communion as in being like a withered branch on a living tree. You are dead and disconnected and out of communion. The idea is that you cannot erase your belonging to the Church but you can still defy it. It is like how your money belongs to you even if it gets lost. The connection to the Church is very slender if you take the withered branch on the tree analogy seriously. It is too thin to justify saying that everybody baptised is Catholic.

The real reason is that the Catholic Church wants to tie the label Catholic to baptism so that anybody who is baptised might hopefully agree and put Catholic on census forms. The more support the Church is perceived to have the more power and glory and money it gets. Another reason for the baptismal labelling is so that you will accept or identify with the label and thus end up thinking in a narrow way as desired by the Catholic faith. It seeks to create a specifically Catholic lens for you to look through. It seeks you to label truths as Catholic. That is an abuse of truth and those who need the truth. It is not a Catholic truth that torturing a baby is wrong. It is just a truth. Don't steal truth for the Church. What next? The Big Bang being a Catholic truth not a scientific one?