

RCIA: SESSION THIRTEEN

BAPTISM

Week: 09/01/23-15/01/23

1. Catechesis on Baptism

Introduce Baptism as one of the seven Sacraments in the Catholic Faith. This is the first Sacrament a Catholic receives; it is the GATEWAY to the rest of the Sacraments.



Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan by his cousin John the Baptist. In Jesus' day, Baptism involved full immersion in water. When people came to John the Baptist for Baptism, it was a public declaration of their sinfulness and their wish to repent and turn away from sin and to be born again into a new life. Jesus queued along with all the sinners waiting to be baptised. We will now listen to an account of Jesus' Baptism in the Gospel according to Mark.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Video Presentation

Introduce video by talking briefly about John the Baptist and his background. Notion of Purity very important in his family. Cleansing Rituals and association with Essenes. Show Qumran Scrolls.

Show video of Jesus' Baptism. Point out full immersion. Discuss significance of Jesus' Baptism as marking the beginning of his Missionary Life and Public Life. Play video again. Ask the inquirers to pay special attention to what happens once Jesus comes out of the water.

Afterwards discuss the dove which lands on Jesus' shoulder. Explain that the Dove is representative of/physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit. God sent the Holy Spirit to his Son Jesus to help him in his Ministry. In Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit prepared Jesus for his public life, Baptism and the Holy Spirit prepares us for our lives as Catholics. Talk about the Dove above the Altar in the Church of the Immaculate Conception. John told the crowds that where he baptised with water, the Messiah would baptise with the Holy Spirit.

Today, Baptism is very different. In most cases, Catholic Baptism with water is carried out at the Font. (Although full immersion does still occur) the majority of Catholics are baptised as babies. Advantages of Adult Baptism- memory and own choice.

What does Baptism mean?

Baptism is such a big event. It changes everything. Through Baptism we become part of the Body of Christ, the Church. Through Baptism, Christ claims ownership of us. Through Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit and become new people, born again.

The Rite of Baptism

Explain to the inquirers that there are symbols used during the Rite. Draw attention to the symbols (these will be displayed in order on a table for the inquirers to see clearly). These symbols are very important, and each has their

part to play in the Ceremony of Baptism. Go through each symbol and explain the significance of each one.



Explain that the Rite of Baptism is designed as a journey. It represents the Christian journey through life. It is a beautiful and symbolic ceremony. Draw the inquirers attention to the Journey of Baptism Chart. There are four different stages/stations in the Rite. These are the Door, the Lectern, the Font and the Altar. As an aid to remembering these stages we can call them the 4 'W's': Welcome, Word, Washing and Witness. A scallop shell is often used to pour the Baptismal water in order to explain the notion of journey/pilgrimage – both for the ceremony and the life of the Christian. Discuss what happens at each stage.



Welcome

Word

Washing

Witness

2. Gospel Reflection Sunday 15th January is the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A (Jn. 1:29-34)

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Do I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

GOSPEL READING

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said: A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water.' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit.' Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.