

II. BAPTISM

FORM A

Introduction

Dearly Beloved, Holy Baptism is a most precious sacrament which Our Lord Jesus Christ has instituted in His Church and which He commands us faithfully to observe. In baptism we enter into solemn and lifelong covenant with God and receive the sign and seal of that covenant to our comfort; we publicly identify ourselves with Our Lord, His death, His resurrection and His Church, which is the body and the company of all the faithful. These persons¹ present have come to receive this holy sacrament. Let us therefore pray for them that God our Father will grant them strength to keep the vows which they shall make and remain faithful in His service throughout all their lives.

¹ Wherever necessary, change the terms to singular and use the pronouns he or she or him or her.

Prayer

Either the following or an appropriate extemporaneous prayer may now be offered.

Almighty and everlasting God, You are the aid of all who need, the helper of all who come to You, the life of those who believe, and the resurrection of the dead. Look now in Your great mercy upon these Your children [*you may name the persons being baptized if you wish*], who in loving obedience to Your command, come now to be baptized. Remind them often of the sacred vows which they are about to take before You and Your people, and strengthen them always to keep them faithfully. Grant them true faith, firm hope, and steadfast love, that joyfully bearing their cross, they may faithfully obey Your Word, trust fully in Your grace, and come at last to Your eternal joy, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Scripture Lesson

The officiating minister may read the following Scripture or another fitting pas-sage.

Hear the words of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, recorded in St. Matthew, chapter 28: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, 134 RITUALS ~ BAPTISM and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things what-soever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Address To The Baptismal Candidates

Dearly Beloved, you have heard how that we have prayed for you that God will look in mercy upon you, strengthen you to keep the sacred vows that you are about to make, and bring you at last to His eternal joy. Be assured that He is always faithful to keep His covenant with His children and has promised through Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom He yielded up for our redemption, to grant these gracious favors which we have asked of Him. Now on your part, you must promise before Him in the presence of this congregation to take upon yourself all the obligations of this holy sacrament.

The Baptismal Covenant

Do you renounce the devil and all his works, and the love for the evil of this world, with all its sinful desires, so that you will not follow or be led by them?

ANSWER: I renounce them all.

Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and of earth? And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, Our Lord? And that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary? That He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and was buried? That He arose again the third day? That He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Al-mighty, and that from thence He shall come again at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead? And do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting?

ANSWER: All this I steadfastly believe.

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, put your whole trust in the sufficiency of His grace, and promise to serve Him faithfully within the fellow-ship of His holy church?

ANSWER: I do.

Is it your desire now to be baptized in the Christian faith?

ANSWER: It is my desire.

Will you then obediently keep God's will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of your life?

ANSWER: I will endeavor to do so, the Lord being my helper.

Prayer

Almighty and Everlasting God, the Author of Eternal life, grant that the regenerating grace which You have mercifully given to these persons shall not have been bestowed in vain. May they who are about to be baptized in water know also that greater baptism of the Holy Spirit, that being cleansed from all sin and being replenished with Your strength, they shall grow in every Christian grace and virtue. Look mercifully upon them—and upon all of us who profess Your name—all throughout this life and then in the world to come. We now consecrate these believers to You through the sacrament of baptism. In the name of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has taught us to pray, saying: [*Corporately recite The Lord's Prayer*]

The Administration

_____ [Full name of candidate], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The minister shall then immerse in water or sprinkle or pour water upon each candidate.

The Benediction

May God Almighty, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, grant you to be strengthened with power through His Holy Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you may be filled with the fullness of God.

FORM B

Introduction

Jesus Christ instructed us to "... make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything He had commanded." And His promise was that He would be with us day after day after day, to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

Dear Friends, in keeping with the command of Jesus, you have presented your-selves this day that you might receive the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is not itself the door to salvation, but rather is an outward sign of the new birth which God has wrought in your heart. It proclaims to all the world that you have taken Christ Jesus as the Lord of your lives, and that it is your purpose always to obey Him. In order that we may hear your testimony of what God has done for you, and that we may know that you understand the significance of the step you are taking, we want to ask you these questions:

1. Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and do you know that He has forgiven your sins?

ANSWER: I do.

2. Do you desire to be baptized in His name?

ANSWER: I do.

3. Do you intend by this act to testify to all the world that you are a Christian and will be a loyal follower of Christ?

ANSWER: I do.

4. Do you believe in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments? And will you make them the guide for your life?

ANSWER: I do and I will.

5. Trusting God to help you, will you resist temptation always and keep from doing those things that you know to be sinful or displeasing to God?

ANSWER: I will.

6. Will you attend church services and do those things you know a Christian should do?

ANSWER: I will.

Please join us in saying the Apostles' creed and, thus, declare now your faith both publicly and with conviction. I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Church universal, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer

The minister shall ask the name of each candidate and shall immerse the candidate in water, or, if desired, may sprinkle or pour water, saying:

_____ [Full name of candidate], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let the group lift a song of worship (such as "My Jesus I Love Thee") and then the minister shall close in prayer.