



From A Bishop's Journal (668)

What do You Say about Your Baptism? (6)

Once again thank the many witnesses who sent me their reflection on baptism. May these reflections be an inspiration to each one of us.

A Life of Grace

Baptism was the key that opened to me the door to an entire life of faith – faith in a God I would never see except through the eyes of loving parents when they brought me to church to be baptised, because of their faith in God. From the very first I was immersed in their knowledge of a loving God, inherited from their own parents. I can honestly say that I became a member of the Body of Christ through their act of faith when I was brought to church to be made a member of our Christian community. Blessed by the Holy Spirit, I was able to recognise and appreciate the privileges of a loving God through the example and teaching of loving parents. Isn't it wonderful that a small amount of water cleans not only my whole being but also allows me, if I so desire, to live a life immersed in the grace of God, and in sublime love? – Mavis M'Cluskey, N.D.S.C.

On the Right Path

If I write the word "Baptism" with a capital B, it is because it is the greatest and most important word in every human life. From birth to death, this sacrament draws me to the Trinity, through the total Christ. This journey in the faith is as slow as the unfolding of one's life. It is first to my parents that I owe this priceless gift. However, such a treasure must develop and bear fruit, otherwise it wastes away and is lost. The actions and words of our parents set us on the right path. I had the joy of having a grandmother who had a knack for boiling things down to essentials, I admired her and she loved us. Nuns, too, helped me discover prayer and the greatness of a single mass. The Holy Spirit drew me to meditation and to trust in this God who showed Himself more and more as a Father full of kindness, and a lover of each of His children. My being drawn to God led me to seek Him and love Him all the more, and this led me to the thought of dedicating myself to Him in the religious life. I was wrapped up in His Word: "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40). I chose to serve him as a Grey Nun, a servant of the poor. With time I got to realise that I am Church with all my brothers and sisters who want to follow Christ, and that together we must always better know about him, love him, and serve him in the poor among us. The Word of God and the daily liturgy are the central points of my prayer and daily reflection. Among my apostolic

activities I have the pleasure of meeting young couples for “Baptism follow-up.” I am always amazed at their openness, and the depth of their reflection. I am privileged to harvest where others have sown. When I join in the monthly celebration of baptism in my parish, it takes me back to my own baptism, and makes me discover more and more the grandeur and richness of this sacrament. – Geneviève Michaud, S.G.M.

Nothing More Beautiful

I am glad to have been baptised in a family of Catholic believers, and regarding baptism preparation, I am very happy with what is given. Young couples who bring their children to be baptised are Catholic, but 90% of them are non-practising. This is too bad. We also have problems in meeting the godparents, because most of them are from outside our milieu. We baptise these tiny infants and then we no longer see them nor their parents and godparents. In our parish baptisms are always held the second Saturday of each month. My feeling would be that we have special days once in a while, to bring young couples together for their child’s baptism preparation. For me, there is truly nothing more beautiful than an infant’s baptism. I just love it! – Jeannine Montreuil

Grace and Privilege

I view my baptism like a grace which, like all other graces, was given to me without cost. Yes, it is without cost that I was born into a Christian family, and that my parents presented me for baptism. It was also without charge that the Father who created me a child of God led me, through baptism, into the great Church founded by His Son Jesus Christ. What grace, what privilege! This welcome into the Church of Jesus Christ gives me access to the sacraments, sources of vitality to my Christian life. Since baptism I have been guided and sustained by the helping hand of the one who endured suffering and death, to lead me to life. Vatican Council II made me aware of the greatness of the baptismal event, in my life as a Christian. Like Saint Paul I could say: “Nothing can ever separate me from the love of Christ.” Baptism brought me onto the path blazed by the dead and risen Jesus, and I cannot remain silent about him. Each day I ask him to make me a true and worthy witness of the message I bring, to make him known. I am thankful for belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the great Christian community, to whose construction I am summoned. I sometimes try to imagine what my life would be like if I had not been baptised, if I did not hold on to the risen Jesus. I always come back to the creed of my Christian faith which incites me to surpass myself every day and to marvel at everything I have received and receive each day from God’s merciful heart. Yes, as an adult I can state that the baptism I received as a child did not stay on the church steps. Rather, it opened to me the doors of the great Church into which I entered, and about which I am proud. – Irène Pelletier, f.m.a.

+ François Thibodeau

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

10-25-06