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By

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BAPTISM

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REV. FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.S.S.R., S.T.D.

I. THE MEANING AND THE INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM

The word *baptize* is derived from a Greek verb βαπτειν, which originally signified *to immerse* or *to plunge*. We say *originally signified*, because even before the time of Christ the word βαπτειν had acquired a more general meaning—namely, *to wash*—that is, to cleanse a person or thing, not only by immersion, but also by the pouring or by the sprinkling of water.

The washing, either entire or partial, of the human body with water is well adapted to constitute a religious rite, since it so aptly symbolizes the purity of heart that the service of the Almighty demands. It is not surprising therefore that bodily ablutions have figured prominently in religious worship since the very dawn of the human race. Ceremonial ablutions were practiced by the ancient Greeks and Romans; and even today are found among the uncivilized tribes of Africa. Under the Old Law, God prescribed various religious washings for the Jewish people (Lev. xv.). Shortly before Christ began His public ministry St. John the

Baptist conferred a kind of baptism in the River Jordan on all who publicly professed repentance for their sins; and Our Divine Redeemer, sinless though He was, deigned to receive this penitential ablution from the hands of His saintly prophet (Matt. iii. 6, 11, 16).

An honest perusal of the Gospels, however, will convince one that Christ Himself instituted a baptism that is far more holy and effective than the ablutions of the Old Law and the baptism of St. John. Our Savior intended His baptism for all mankind, and willed that it should be the principal rite of initiation into His Church. Shortly after He began to preach His Gospel, Christ spoke of His baptism in no uncertain terms to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). Even more explicit was the reference to baptism in the command He gave the Apostles before His ascension into heaven: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19). St. Mark, in his Gospel, records a phrase used by the Master on that same occasion, which emphasizes the importance of baptism: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16).

Faithful to Christ's command, the Apostles proclaimed baptism as a necessary condition for the acquisition of grace and for membership in the Christian Church. "Do penance and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of

your sins," was the exhortation of St. Peter to the multitudes that thronged the streets of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost Sunday. And so deeply did his words affect the hearts of his hearers that "there were added (that is, to the Church, by baptism) that day three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 38, 41).

The Apostles made it clear that the baptism of Christ was different from, and superior to, the baptism of St. John the Baptist. On one occasion St. Paul found at Ephesus some who wished to be Christians, but had received only the baptism of John; and immediately the Apostle commanded them to be baptized again "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix. 1-5).

One of the most charming narratives of the early Church is the account of the baptism of a distinguished official of Ethiopia, who was returning by chariot to his own land after a visit to Jerusalem. Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the deacon Philip accosted this man, and seating himself beside him in the chariot, expounded to him the claims of the Christian religion. So convincing were the words of Philip that then and there the official decided to become a Christian, and proclaimed his faith with the simple but sublime declaration: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It chanced that they passed near a body of water, and the fervent convert said: "See, here is water; what doth hinder me from being baptized?" Straightway the two descended from the chariot, and Philip baptized the fortunate man, who then continued on his way, rejoicing (Acts viii. 26-40).

Baptism is a Sacrament

Baptism fulfils all the conditions required for a sacrament of the Christian Law. It is an external rite, capable of producing grace, instituted by Christ for the use of mankind. Indeed so apparent is the sacramental nature of baptism from the various scriptural accounts of this rite, that practically all the numerous Christian sects agree with the Catholic Church in designating it as a sacrament—though, as we shall see below, not all of these denominations are one with us regarding the manner of baptizing, the conferring of baptism on infants, etc.

Besides the clear testimony of the New Testament, the writings that come down to us from the earliest centuries, such as the anonymous work entitled *The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, and the theological treatises of St. Justin and of Tertullian, furnish adequate and convincing proof of the divine institution and of the sacramental nature of baptism.

II. THE MANNER OF BAPTIZING

Every Christian Sacrament is essentially composed of two elements, known as the *matter* and the *form*, which when combined become an instrument that God uses to communicate His grace to the soul of the recipient. The matter is generally some material thing; the form is made up of the words spoken by the one conferring the sacrament.

The Matter of Baptism

The matter of baptism is natural water. This is evident from Our Lord's statement that man must be "born again of *water* and the Holy Ghost," and also from the many accounts of baptism recorded in the New Testament and in the early ecclesiastical writings. As far as the *validity* of the sacrament is concerned, any kind of water suffices—whether it be rain-water, water from the ocean, river, lake, etc. Other liquids, such as wine, milk, fruit-juices, etc., will not serve the purpose. Even saliva, tears, perspiration, etc., though by chemical analysis they are found to be composed principally of water, cannot be used for baptism because they are not regarded as water in the common estimate of men, which is the norm by which the requisites for the sacraments are to be determined.

For solemn baptism—that which is accompanied by the ceremonies to be described later (page 20)—water specially blessed on the vigils of Easter and of Pentecost is used. However, this blessing is not necessary for the *validity* of the sacrament; so that baptism would be given even if the priest used unblest water. When, in case of necessity, a lay person baptizes, he can use ordinary water drawn from the faucet.

The Form of Baptism

The form of baptism is the single sentence: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." These words should be pronounced with the greatest care, exactly as they are prescribed, for even a slight modification or mispronuncia-

tion may endanger the validity of the sacrament. Thus, if *christen* were said instead of *baptize*, the baptism would be doubtful because the idea of *washing* does not seem to be sufficiently expressed by *christen*. Even the word *and* could not be safely omitted, lest the distinction between the divine Persons be not adequately manifested. This may appear to some persons like undue hair-splitting, but we must always remember that the graces of baptism have been annexed by the Almighty to the rite as prescribed by His Divine Son; and Jesus Christ explicitly commanded that this sacrament be conferred in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19).

Manner of Baptizing

In regard to the manner in which the water is to be applied in baptizing, the Catholic Church teaches that not only total immersion, but also the pouring or the sprinkling of the water are proper modes of giving the sacrament. On this point the Church encounters opposition from several Christian denominations, especially from the Baptists and from the Eastern Orthodox churches,¹ who hold that baptism can be validly conferred only when the recipient is totally immersed in water. Their principal argument in support of this contention is that the word *baptize* means *immerse* or *plunge*.

¹By the Orthodox churches we mean those of the East that were formerly in communion with the Catholic Church, but about the tenth century separated themselves from it. These churches recruit their members for the greater part from the people of Russia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Rumania.

Now, Catholics readily admit that the word *baptize* bore such a meaning *according to its original usage*; but, at the same time, it can be conclusively proved that before the time of Christ this word had acquired a more general sense—namely, *to wash*, irrespective of the manner in which the washing is performed. Thus, the original Greek text of the Gospel of St. Mark (vii. 4) asserts that the Pharisees did not eat until they had been *baptized*—and this, as is evident from the preceding verse, signifies merely the *washing of their hands*. Again, the Greek version of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xxxiv. 30), which was written many years before the birth of Christ, speaks of the ceremonial *baptism*, prescribed by the Old Law for one who had touched a corpse; but from the Book of Numbers (xix. 12) we learn that this rite was only a *sprinkling* with water. Now, since the words of Christ are to be interpreted according to the meaning they bore when He uttered them, His command to *baptize* must be understood as prescribing *some kind of ablution*, without restricting it to complete immersion.

Immersion Not Necessary

Nor do other parts of the New Testament provide arguments for the necessity of immersion for the administration of baptism. It is true, this method was doubtless used on some occasions—as for example, in the baptism of the Ethiopian official by Philip (page 3). But there are other occasions recorded of bap-

tism being given in circumstances which seem to have rendered the use of immersion impossible. For example, it is hardly probable that there was a sufficient quantity of water for immersion in the jail in which St. Paul was confined, and in which he baptized the jailer and his family (Acts xvi. 33).

At any rate the matter is decisively settled by writings which date from the earliest centuries of the Christian era, and which have preserved for us the true interpretation of the doctrine and worship of the Christian religion as Christ Himself intended them to be. From this source abundant evidence can be obtained to prove that immersion is not necessary. The work known as *The Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*, which was written about the year 100, speaks of baptizing by pouring water three times on the head in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the second century Tertullian, in the third St. Cyprian, in the fifth St. Augustine, all attest the adequacy of *sprinkling* for the administration of baptism, and refer to this method as being used especially for those confined to bed.² Beyond all doubt, the Catholic stand on this question is entirely substantiated by the teaching and by the practice of the early Church.

Valid Baptism

Tradition also informs us, however, that not any and every pouring or sprinkling suffices, but that the

²Cf. Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments*, I, page 218.

water must touch the *head*, the principal seat of the soul. Moreover, the *skin* must be touched by the water, so that the *validity* of the baptism would be in doubt if only the hair received the ablution. Finally, the water must *flow* over the brow or the crown, for if the skin were merely moistened, the idea of *washing*, which is essential to baptism, would not be sufficiently expressed. It is on account of this last condition that the Church does not employ sprinkling as a usual mode of baptizing, because water that is merely sprinkled is liable not to flow. Nowadays, the general practice in churches of the Latin rite is to baptize by pouring; while among Catholics of the Orient immersion is commonly used.

How to Baptize

To sum up what every Christian should know regarding the manner of conferring baptism—for one can never tell when the necessity of administering this sacrament to a dying person may arise:—*Pour natural water on the crown of the head or on the brow of the person to be baptized, in sufficient quantity to flow and while pouring, pronounce distinctly and exactly the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

III. THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

The Catholic Church holds that the sacrament of baptism is a necessary means to salvation. In other

words, according to the ordinary law of divine providence, no one can enter heaven after death unless he has been baptized during his earthly pilgrimage. This doctrine was unequivocally enunciated by Jesus Christ in the words: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). The reason is, because all men come into the world with original sin on their souls; and according to the ordinary law of divine providence, original sin—which is sufficient to prevent one from entering heaven even if one has committed no actual sins—can be removed only by the sacrament of baptism.

This refers, however, to the *ordinary law of divine providence*, for there are two *extraordinary* means by which the remission of sin and the attainment of eternal salvation are available even without the actual reception of the sacrament of baptism. These two means are known respectively as the *baptism of desire*, and the *baptism of blood*.

Baptism of Desire

By baptism of *desire* is meant an act of love of God or of perfect contrition (that is, sorrow for one's sins because sin is an offence against God's infinite goodness), made by one who has not received the baptism of water. Our Lord has promised that whosoever loves Him will be loved by God the Father (John xiv. 21)—that is, will receive the state of grace. Consequently, any person, whether baptized or unbaptized,

who elicits an act of love of God or of perfect contrition will at once receive the pardon of his sins, and if he dies in these dispositions, will obtain entrance into the kingdom of heaven. As is evident, only one who has attained to the use of reason can profit by the baptism of desire.

Baptism of Blood

By baptism of blood is meant the *enduring* of martyrdom for Christ or for some Christian virtue. That martyrdom will merit eternal salvation even for one who has never been baptized has been the constant teaching of Christian tradition, and can be deduced from the unconditional promise of Our Divine Redeemer: "He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it" (Matt. x. 39). This holds good also of infants who are slain out of hatred for Christ or for His religion, like the children of Bethlehem, who were put to death by Herod in his desire to do away with the new-born Savior (Matt. ii. 16).

It must always be remembered, however, that the baptism of desire and the baptism of blood are only *extraordinary* means of justification, and hence do not dispense with the obligation of receiving the ordinary means, the baptism of water. Consequently, one who has received sanctifying grace through an act of love of God or an act of perfect contrition is still bound to receive the sacrament of baptism if he is aware of its existence; and an unbaptized person who is dying for

the Christian faith must receive this sacrament before he dies, if there is an opportunity of doing so.

From what has been said it can be seen that every person who reaches the age of reason, even though he never hears of the Christian religion, can be saved. For, if such a one observes the natural law as his conscience prescribes, he will, through the guidance of divine providence, be led to a sufficient knowledge of God to make an act of love of Him, or of perfect contrition, and thus will be enabled to attain to justification and to eternal salvation.

Unbaptized Infants

The case is different, however, with infants. For, since a child before reaching the use of reason is incapable of making either of the acts designated as the baptism of desire, his only chance of salvation lies in the baptism of water.³ At first sight, this doctrine seems very harsh, especially since the lack of the sacrament in the case of a child who dies unbaptized is not due to any fault on the part of the child, but is caused by the neglect or ignorance of his parents, or by some unforeseen sickness or accident, or by the fact that he is born in a pagan land where the Gospel has not yet been preached, etc. But a closer examination of the way in which Catholic theologians explain this point puts the matter in a more favorable light. For, we do

³Excepting the unusual case of a child that is martyred out of hatred for the Christian faith.

not say that children who die without baptism are condemned to the torments of hell. On the contrary, it is the common view of theologians that these little ones will enjoy for all eternity a *natural* happiness surpassing the most exquisite bliss of the present life. It is true, they are excluded from the *supernatural* joy of seeing God face to face; but it must always be remembered that the happiness of heaven is an entirely gratuitous gift, to which no created being has any right in justice; and therefore God does no injustice to unbaptized infants when He excludes them from heaven. Of course, the further question might be asked, why God grants the grace of baptism to some infants and not to others—and here, it is true, we come face to face with an inscrutable mystery of divine providence. But at any rate we can see that God is not unjust in this matter, any more than is a rich man who chooses to give alms to certain poor persons and not to others. The grace of baptism, like other graces of the supernatural order, can be dispensed by the Almighty to whomsoever He wills.

Despite the fact that children who die without baptism enjoy a state of natural happiness for all eternity, yet they would have possessed an incomprehensibly greater happiness had they received baptism. Accordingly, it should be the supreme concern of Christian parents to provide this most necessary sacrament for the little ones whom God has entrusted to their care. If an infant is in danger of death, and the priest cannot be had at once, a lay person (if possible, *not* the child's

father or mother) should baptize the little one according to the method described above (page 9). Moreover, the law of the Church prescribes that the children of Christian parents, even when there is no danger of death, shall be brought to the church for baptism *as soon as possible* (Canon 770). Many reliable theologians hold that parents are guilty of mortal sin if, without a good reason, they defer a child's baptism more than ten or eleven days.

IV. THE MINISTER AND THE RECIPIENT OF BAPTISM

The sacrament of baptism can be *validly* administered by any person who is capable of performing the ceremony properly, and has the intention of giving baptism as a Christian religious rite. But it is not *lawful* for a lay person to baptize except in a case of necessity when a priest cannot be had; nevertheless, if a lay person should baptize a child even outside of such a case, the sacrament would be both *valid* and *fruitful*—that is, the child would receive both the character and the grace of baptism, just as if the rite had been performed by a priest.

Non-Catholic Can Baptize

Even one who does not believe in the Christian religion and is not himself baptized can administer this

sacrament. For, the only interior disposition required in the minister is the *intention* of giving baptism—and such an intention can be had even by one who disbelieves the Christian doctrines. For example, a Jewish doctor, although he has no faith in the efficacy of baptism, can nevertheless, as a favor to Christian parents, perform on their child the baptismal ceremony, with the intention of giving that religious rite which the parents desire—and thus, he has in reality, the intention of giving baptism. However, a *Catholic* should be chosen to give private baptism, whenever it is possible.

The minister of *solemn* baptism—that which is accompanied by the impressive ceremonies to be described later (page 20)—is ordinarily a priest or a bishop. However, for a good reason, a deacon can be delegated to confer this solemn rite.

The Person Baptized

The recipient of baptism can be any person who is not yet baptized. One who has reached the age of reason cannot receive the sacrament *validly* unless he has the intention of being baptized. Hence, if the baptismal rite were performed on one who had never made the intention to receive baptism, the sacrament would be null and void (even though the person were dying bereft of his senses). However, once a person has made the intention of being baptized, the sacrament can be conferred on him even when he is unconscious. Such would be the case of one who is preparing to become a Catholic, and is bereft of the use of his

senses by a mortal illness. To receive the *fruit* or *grace* of baptism, one who has reached the age of reason, besides the intention, must also have made an act of faith in the principal doctrines of Christianity, and an act of contrition for all (at least, mortal) sins he has ever committed.

Children who have not reached the age of reason, although they are incapable of the aforesaid intention and acts, can nevertheless receive baptism *validly* and *fruitfully*. This is a Catholic doctrine that is vehemently opposed by many outside our fold, on the ground that infants, being unable to appreciate the ceremony of baptism and to cooperate with it, cannot partake of its salutary effects.

An Objection Answered

This objection is based on the idea that the sacraments merely incite the recipients to pious acts, by which they merit grace. But, as can be proved from Sacred Scripture and from tradition, the sacraments possess a *direct* efficacy—that is, they are instruments of the divine power, and consequently are able to produce grace in the soul *immediately*, and not merely dependently on the dispositions of the recipient. Hence, the lack of intention, faith, etc., in children below the age of reason is no impediment to the efficacy of baptism, which accordingly removes from their souls the stain of original sin, and confers on them sanctifying grace. Even in the case of those who have reached the use of reason, the acts of faith and contrition men-

tioned above do not add to the efficacy of the sacramental rite, but are merely conditions demanded by God, Who does not wish to sanctify persons having the use of reason without their own free cooperation.⁴

Infant Baptism

Our principal positive argument for infant baptism is based on Our Lord's statement: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." These words indicate that baptism is a necessary means of salvation for all, children as well as adults. Hence, unless we wish to believe that God has deprived infants of every means of salvation, we must admit that baptism cleanses their souls of original sin and opens to them the gates of heaven.

Instances of infant baptism are at least implied in the New Testament. It is recorded that St. Paul once baptized a jailer and his whole family (Acts xvi. 33), and on another occasion Lydia and her household (Acts xvi. 15), and on still another occasion the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 16). Now, it is quite probable that there were some children below the age of reason in these families, yet the Bible tells us that all the members without exception were baptized. At any rate, it was the practice of the early Church to baptize infants, as we learn from the writings of such authorities as St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, and Pope

⁴Cf. *The Sacraments—What They Are—What They Do*, pages 22-29.

Siricius.⁵ It is true, there was for a time in the early centuries a custom of deferring baptism until the age of maturity so that the recipient might appreciate the sacrament better, and benefit more by its effects. But even those who had this custom admitted that children *could* be baptized, and hastened to administer this sacrament to infants in danger of death. In fact, when infants were baptized in the early Church, they were also given at once the sacraments of Confirmation and of the Holy Eucharist.

V. THE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

There are two effects conferred on the soul by the sacrament of baptism—a *character* and *grace*.

Character of Baptism

By the *character* of baptism is meant a spiritual mark which is imprinted on the soul of every one who receives this sacrament validly. This character remains on the soul for all eternity; hence, baptism once validly received can never be repeated.

This character makes the baptized person a member of the Church of Christ. Hence, only one who has been baptized can *validly* receive the other sacraments; because these have been instituted by Jesus Christ for the members of His Church. Similarly, only those who have been baptized are subject to the laws of the Church; but, on the other hand, *all* baptized persons are under the jurisdiction of the lawful rulers of

⁵Cf. Kenrick, *Baptism*, page 134.

Christ's Church. This is the reason why the Catholic Church believes she has the right to legislate for all baptized persons, even those who are members of some other denomination; and accordingly, she extends certain matrimonial impediments (for example, blood-relationship to the third degree) even to non-Catholics who have been baptized. Many regard this as an act of supreme arrogance on the part of the Catholic Church; yet it is the only logical attitude that can be taken by an organization that believes itself to be the one true Church of Jesus Christ, empowered by Him with authority over all who bear on their souls the character of baptism. A child who is born in the United States is by that very fact bound to the obligations of American citizenship, whether he likes them or not. Similarly, one who by baptism is incorporated into Christ's Church is by that very fact subject to the laws passed by the legitimate authorities of that Church. It matters not if the character was conferred before the recipient came to the use of reason, or if baptism was administered in a non-Catholic communion; for it is by the decree of God, the Supreme ruler of mankind, that all who bear the character of baptism shall be subject to the authority of Christ's Church. And that Church, we firmly believe, is the Catholic Church alone.

Grace of Baptism

The special *grace* of baptism is the *spiritual regeneration* or *rebirth* of the soul. Our Lord Himself

taught us this when He stated that by baptism a man is *born again* of water and the Holy Ghost (John iii. 5). This expression means that just as by his corporeal birth a person begins to live the natural life of the body, so by baptism he begins to live the supernatural life of the soul, which is a participation of the life of God Himself, and confers a right to the eternal joys of heaven. This new life of grace expels from the soul spiritual death—that is sin, both original and actual—and remits all punishment, both eternal and temporal, due to sin.

As was stated above (page 16), one who has attained the use of reason must make acts of faith and of contrition in order to receive the *grace* of baptism. But to receive the *character* such a one needs only the intention of being baptized. Thus, a person who would receive this sacrament for some worldly motive without any sorrow for his sins, would obtain the character, but not the grace of baptism. Of course, he would be guilty of the great sacrilege of receiving a sacrament unworthily; nevertheless, by God's mercy, he can subsequently obtain the grace of baptism if he truly repents of his sins.

VI. THE CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM

To render the administration of baptism more impressive, and to manifest in a vivid way the effects of this sacrament, the Church has established certain ceremonies for the solemn conferring of baptism. These

ceremonies are not necessary for the *validity* of the sacrament; however, they are so important that even when a child has been baptized privately it must afterward be brought to church so that these ceremonies may be supplied. We shall briefly describe the more noteworthy of these accessory rites.

Before the actual baptism the priest pronounces several exorcisms—that is, admonitions to the devil to depart from the one to be baptized. For, a soul in sin, even if it be only original sin, is in some measure subject to the power of the devil. To render these exorcisms more effective, the priest traces on the child's brow and breast the saving sign of the cross; and breathes three times in its face to signify the coming of the Holy Spirit.

On the child's tongue a pinch of blessed salt is placed, for salt is a symbol of the wisdom that should dominate the Christian life. Likewise, because of its preserving properties, salt typifies the preservation of sanctifying grace until death, which should be the chief concern of every baptized person.

The priest touches the ears of the child that they may be open to receive the doctrine of Christ, and the nose, to signify that the life of a baptized person should be pervaded with the odor of virtue. In performing this rite the priest moistens his fingers with saliva, after the example of Our Divine Savior Who used spittle in curing the deaf and the blind (Mark vii. 33; John ix. 6).

Before pouring the sanctifying water the priest

anoints the child's breast and shoulders with blessed oil (called *oil of catechumens*). This is probably an allusion to the ancient custom of anointing athletes before their contests; for the baptized must wage an unceasing contest against the world, the flesh and the devil. After the actual baptism the head is anointed with the sacred oil of *chrism*. Kings at their coronation, and priests at their ordination are anointed, and in baptism this anointing with chrism signifies the kingly and priestly dignity of Jesus Christ which the baptismal character in some measure bestows.

The recipient makes a profession of faith in the principal doctrines of Christianity, recites the Apostles' Creed and the Our Father, and solemnly renounces the devil with his works and pomps. In the case of adults, this is a sign that they are receiving baptism of their own free will, and that they believe the Christian religion. When children are baptized, these professions are made in their name by their godparents. It may be well to remark that the office of godparent is a very responsible one, entailing the obligation to provide for the religious training of the child should the parents die or neglect their duty in this respect. Both godparents should touch the child while the water of baptism is being poured.

After the actual baptism, a white cloth is placed on the head of the baptized person, and a candle is given into his hand (or, in the case of a child, into the hands of the god-parents). The white cloth signifies the beautiful garment of sanctifying grace with which the

soul has just been robed; and when giving it, the priest admonishes the recipient to preserve it immaculate even to the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. The candle is an allusion to the ancient custom of meeting distinguished persons with lighted torches; and when he confers it, the priest expresses the hope that when the hour of death comes, the baptized person may be prepared to meet Jesus Christ together with all the saints in the heavenly court and may live for ever and ever.

CONCLUSION

Most of those who have read this pamphlet are doubtless persons who received the sacrament of baptism in childhood. May this summary account of the Catholic doctrines concerning this great sacrament serve to inspire them with a deep sense of gratitude to God for the inestimable favor He has granted them in giving them this sacrament of regeneration—a favor that millions of souls have never received and never will receive. May we who have received it, appreciate it, and show our appreciation by keeping our baptismal vows unbroken and our baptismal robes unsullied, as becomes those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

soul has just been reborn; and when giving it this
 price announces the receipt to preserve it. Hence
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 distinguished persons which united together; and when
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 the hour of death comes the favored person may be
 present to meet Jesus Christ together with all the
 saints in the heavenly court and may see the face and

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Catholic doctrine concerning the great sacrament
 seems to inspire them with a deep sense of gratitude
 to God for the Incarnation. Even He has granted them
 in giving them this sacrament of redemption—a favor
 that millions of souls have never received and never
 will receive. Make us who have received it appreciate
 it and show our appreciation by doing our best for
 your mission and our baptismal vows fulfilled, as
 because those who have been baptized in the name of
 the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

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