

LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



A Column by Fr. Tom

I Baptize You Priest, Prophet and King

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

[MT 28:20] These are the words of our Lord Jesus to His disciples in what we call “The Great Commission.” In these words, He gives his disciples the mission to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them in the name of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is with this “Great Commission,” along with the example of His own Baptism, that Jesus established the Sacrament of Baptism.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) states, “Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as [children] of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission...” [CCC 1213] So, according to this statement, Baptism has three effects: it washes away our sin; incorporates us into the Body of Christ, the Church; and makes us sharers in the mission of Christ.

The first effect of Baptism is that it washes away sin. According to the Catechism, “By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.” [CCC 1263] First of all, it washes away Original Sin, the sin that we inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve, by which they lost unending life in Paradise with God. Through Baptism, we have the possibility of

that life restored. What happens to those who are not baptized? We trust in God's mercy and love that He wants all of His children with Him in Heaven. Baptism also washes away any personal sin. This is especially true for those who are baptized as adults.

In addition, Baptism incorporates us into the Body of Christ and “makes us sharers in the mission” of Christ. So, when we bring this statement together with the “Great Commission” above, we realize that we are not only baptized as part of the mission of the Church, but also baptized to share in that same mission. Last week, we discussed that “there are sacramental graces, gifts proper to the different sacraments.” [CCC 2003] The Sacrament of Baptism gives us the grace we need to carry on the mission that Christ gave to all disciples. We are baptized as “priest, prophet and king.” These titles come from the Baptism rite itself. Each one of these titles gives us certain graces as follows: **priest** – we are given the grace to offer acceptable prayer to our Lord; **prophet** – we are given the grace to speak of our faith; and **king** – in the same manner that Jesus is king, as a servant to others. Jesus told His disciples, “Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all.” [MK 10:43b-44]

Baptism, as the first of all Sacraments, readies us for the rest of the sacramental life, where we receive additional graces. Next week, we continue our discussion with another of the Sacraments of Initiation, Confirmation, the enrichment of the Sacrament of Baptism.

