

**How is Baptism pre-figured in the Old Covenant?**

In the Old Covenant Baptism was pre-figured in various ways: water, seen as a source of life and of death; in the ark of Noah, which saved by means of water; in the passing through the Red Sea, which liberated Israel from Egyptian slavery; in the crossing of the Jordan River, that brought Israel into the promised land

which is the image of eternal life.

Who brought to fulfilment those pre-figurations?

All the Old Covenant pre-figurations find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. At the beginning of His public life Jesus had himself baptised by John the Baptists in the Jordan. On the cross, blood and water, signs of Baptism and the Eucharist, flowed from His pierced side. After His Resurrection He gave to His apostles this mission: “Go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Starting when and to whom has the Church administered Baptism?

From the day of Pentecost, the Church has administered Baptism to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

In what does the essential rite of Baptism consist?

The essential rite of this sacrament consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water over his or her head while invoking the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Who can receive Baptism?

Every person not yet baptised is able to receive Baptism.

Why does the Church baptise infants?

The Church baptises infants because they are born with original sin. They need to be freed from the power of the Evil One and brought into that realm of freedom which belongs to the children of God.

What is required of one who is to be baptised?

Everyone who is to be baptised is required to make a profession of faith. This is done personally in the case of an adult or by the parents and by the Church in the case of infants. Also the godfather or the god-mother and the whole ecclesial community share the responsibility for baptismal preparation (catechumenate) as well as for the development and safeguarding of the faith and grace given at baptism.

Who can baptise?

The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and the priest. In the Latin Church the deacon also can baptise. In case of necessity any person can baptise provided he has the intention of doing what the Church does. This is done by pouring water on the head of the candidate while saying the Trinitarian formula for Baptism: "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

Is Baptism necessary for salvation?

Baptism is necessary for salvation for all those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.

Is it possible to be saved without Baptism?

Since Christ died for the salvation of all, those can be saved without Baptism who die for the faith (*baptism of blood*). Catechumens and all those who, even without knowing Christ and the Church, still (under the impulse of grace) sincerely seek God and strive to do His will can also be saved without Baptism (*Baptism of desire*). The Church in her liturgy entrusts children who die without Baptism to the Mercy of God.

What are the effects of Baptism?

Baptism takes away original sin, all personal sins and all punishment due to sin. It makes the baptised person a participant in the divine life of the Trinity through sanctifying grace the grace of justification which incorporates one into Christ and into His Church. It gives one a share in the priesthood of Christ and provides the basis for communion with all Christians. It bestows the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A baptised person belongs forever to Christ. He is marked with the indelible seal of Christ (character).

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vanKroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk