



## From A Bishop's Journal (672)

### What do You Say about Your Baptism? (7)

Following are the final testimonies received, on baptism. May they really be an invitation to deepen the wonderful reality that is our own baptism.

#### A Place among Them

On a beautiful Sunday in April, 1957, my family brought me as a newborn to the church of Notre-Dame-des-Sept-Douleurs, to be baptised. My parents had decided for me to make me a child of God. With the participation of other members of the community, the priest baptised me. To me, my baptism was God welcoming me. It made me a child of God, a brother of Jesus, and a brother to each one of the immense crowd of believers in Jesus Christ. The community called me by my name, and set a place for me. I was welcomed into the great family of God's children. The gathering of believers, the community of the disciples of Jesus Christ welcomed me. All these people who meet regularly around the Word of God, all these people who cherish, share, and pass on the faith in Jesus Christ made room for me with them. Baptism is also welcoming the Holy Spirit. At baptism, the Spirit of God came down on me with all his graces. He grants me his timeless and transcendent mercy, and source of perpetual renewal. Baptism is the beginning of a new relationship with the Lord, a relationship of Love. He becomes present to me through my parents and my brothers and sisters in the faith. He will continue his presence to me through love, teaching, catechetical instruction, the sacraments, the community gatherings, and prayer. Baptism is also a calling. I am called by my vocation of being a child of God – like all the other baptised – to share in God's love. It is a call to follow Christ through loving others to the point of entering into the Spirit of love between the Father and the Son. It is a vocation of love of neighbour, with Christ, in the Spirit of the infinitely good Creator, our Father. I give thanks to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for having given me such a beautiful gift, the greatest gift one can receive, the gift of baptism and faith. – Jean-François Pelletier, seminarian

#### Foundation and Source

My baptism: birth to a new Life... God's life in me! How can I describe this intimacy which allows me to live with the Lord day after day? I know that he is my light on the path of life... I realised that I do not seek him out often enough. It is especially when I meet couples for their child's baptism preparation that I realise its many implications. The Lord assures me of his presence and of the

strength I need to carry out those commitments I have chosen, especially my priestly ministry. Besides, baptism is the foundation and source of all the ministries exercised by the baptised, whether it be the ordained ministry or one mandated by the bishop for carrying out a function in the diocesan Church. Associated to Christ's threefold mission of priest, prophet, and king, my life becomes an offering through the gift of Christ to his Father... it acquires a new dimension, and I must understand that words spoken and actions made must correspond to his Gospel. In this way, my life becomes a real witnessing, and I can place my charisms in the service of building a better world. It is in openness to others and sharing with them that the Kingdom of God will be realised even better. I thank my parents for not hesitating to have me baptised... I thank Providence for having grown up in a large family, it helped me better discover the Lord's invitations. – Fr. Rino Thériault

### **God's Wonderful Gift**

I let Saint Gregory of Nazianzen help me with my reflection. Speaking of baptism, he says: "We call it gift, grace, anointing, illumination, clothing of incorruptibility, bath of regeneration, seal, and everything that is the most precious." "A gift, because it is given to those who bring nothing." It is such a grace to have had Christian parents who made me a child of God through baptism. What could I personally have brought in exchange, as a newborn child? "Grace, because it is given to the guilty." Thank you, Lord, for having washed away my guilt. "A bath, because sin is swallowed up in the water." Now that I can do so myself, I can say: "Wash away my guilt, O Lord my God, and cleanse me from my sin." "An anointing, because it is sacred and royal (which is what the anointed are)." I thank my godparents for having me share in this grace. "An illumination, because it is a shining light." I thank the members of the Franciscan Secular Order for helping me understand the importance of my baptism, and allowing me to profess my faith, following Saint Francis in the footsteps of Jesus. It was such a precious gift, to make me a child of God and of the Church through baptism and through profession as a secular Franciscan. "Clothes, because it covers over shame." Reconciliation is such a great grace! It allows us to clothe ourselves in the garment of our baptism. "A bath, because it cleanses." Such a wonderful grace! Thank you, Lord. "A seal, because it protects us, and because it is a sign of the lordship of God." Thank you, Lord, for making me your beloved child in baptism. I also let Saint Gregory of Nazianzen close this reflection. He says: "Baptism is the most beautiful and wonderful gift of God." What more could we say? – Michèle Turgeon

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