



Essential Evangelization

Baptism Basics

In today's Gospel reading we hear that Jesus travels from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. Not that the Son of God needed to be baptized, but as Jesus proclaimed, "it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Baptism is a very important sacrament, and it is THE Sacrament of Initiation into His Church. The practice of infant baptism is practiced by Anglicans, Episcopalians and Lutherans, but it is frowned upon by some other religions since there is a lack of faith by the individual. However there are many biblical parallels that prove this practice as right. First of all, the sacrament relies on the faith of the parents and godparents for effectiveness. There are many examples of Jesus healing and saving individuals through the faith of another. One example is the centurion whose servant was paralyzed, another is the paralytic who was lowered through the roof by his friends. In both cases, Jesus healed and saved based on the faith of others.

There are also many New Testament examples of whole households including children being baptized. And when the disciples rebuked the children for coming to Jesus, He said, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mk 10: 15-16).

But perhaps the best biblical case for infant baptism is that of the parallels to circumcision in the Old Testament. Circumcision was the Jewish tradition and prescribed dedication to God and normally administered to children eight days after birth. As Paul states, "In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 2:11-12). Baptism is the parallel tradition in the New Covenant.

*"Jesus answered (Nicodemus), 'Amen, amen, I say to you, **no one** can enter the kingdom of God without being born of **water** and **Spirit**.'"*

Jn 3: 5

*This is one of a series of articles on
Evangelization from the
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