

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

John 3:1-18

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit."

There is a story told about the baptism of King Aengus by St. Patrick in the middle of the fifth century. Sometime during the rite, St. Patrick leaned on his sharp-pointed staff and inadvertently stabbed the king's foot. After the baptism was over, St. Patrick looked down at all the blood, realized what he had done, and begged the king's forgiveness. Why did you suffer this pain in silence, the Saint wanted to know. The king replied, "I thought it was part of the ritual." This is the situation of many Christians these days, though we witness the sacrament quite often, we still are not stable about its meaning and value. What is Holy Baptism?

The Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Holy Baptism by being baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him as a dove, anointed Him, then He assured it after the resurrection when He said to His disciples: "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" (Matthew: 28:19), "He who is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). This is the Biblical-Gospel base for the Sacrament. Here in the given passage, Jesus is helping Nicodemus clear his queries. The word sacrament in itself denotes the means of grace. The Child through Holy Baptism enters into the faith that would carry him/her firmly in the world believing in the Salvation through Jesus Christ. But what do you mean by born again? Paul clearly states this in 2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come, the old has gone, the new is here.*

1. Holy Baptism is The *Deep-Rootedness* in Faith:

- The Child is strengthened in the faith, the god parents are given the responsibility to help the child grow in deep rootedness of faith.
- This Faith helps the child to grow in the faith of the Church
- Nicodemus is in darkness, though he is the member of the Jewish Council he was not deep rooted in faith, here Jesus helps him to deepen his Faith.

2. Holy Baptism is The *Seal of Salvation*:

- The Fourth blessing of the Holy Qurbana of the church clearly states that we are sealed by the seal of the Holy Baptism.
- Salvation is not a one step process, but an everyday growing in the likeness of Christ.
- Thus we begin with the Holy Baptism which clearly shows that we belong(owned) to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. Holy Baptism is The *One-ness* with the Body of Christ:

- Jesus teaches Nicodemus about entering into the kingdom of God, through the process of Holy Baptism we are part of the Kingdom of God.
- We are part of the Body of Christ, we become one with his life, his death and his resurrection.
- Thus we are entitled to live a life like he did, we are entitled to die for the same.
- The kingdom of God becomes a reality when we identify ourselves with the one who gave his life for us.

Let us through the understanding of the sacrament of the Holy Baptism be reminded to deepen our faith, to realise that we are sealed by the Trinity and are part of the Kingdom of God that Jesus has shown us. Baptism is one, there is no second baptism, because "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph 4:5)