



Saved by a Little Water

Read: Luke 3:15-22

In the gospel, Jesus enters into the waters of the Jordan and is baptized by John. By allowing himself to be baptized, Jesus is sanctifying the water and making it holy. This sanctified water is poured upon each of us at baptism, cleansing us of original sin, imparting grace, sanctifying our souls and making us adopted children of God. It is the pathway to salvation.

In St. Paul's letter to Titus, baptism is called the water of rebirth and renewal. It furthermore imparts the Holy Spirit within the soul of the recipient. Paul is merely echoing the Lord's word in John 3, where he states, "no one can enter into the Kingdom of God unless they are born again of water and the Spirit." That is why the Church states that it "does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit'" (CCC 1257).

The primary method by which baptism is administered is through sanctified water. However, *baptism by blood* or *baptism by desire*, bring about the same salvific effect without being a sacrament. Baptism by blood refers to an unbaptized individual who is a martyr for Christ. Baptism by desire refers to those who die without the reception of the sacrament, yet would have received it given the opportunity. Baptism by desire can apply to infants (whose parents desire baptism on their behalf), and those who search for the truth, but through no fault of their own, never encounter Christ fully in this life.

The baptism of Christ reminds us that baptism is necessary for our salvation (1 Peter 3:21). By sanctifying the waters and commissioning his apostles to baptize all nations in his name, Christ is emphasizing the universal importance of baptism.