

Session 3: Baptism

Sharing: Have you ever been baptized or seen someone else get baptized? What was it like?

A Sacramental Worldview

I. Matter matters

- A. Creation
 - 1. God created everything that exists and called it good (Genesis 1-2).
 - 2. He is set apart from his creation, yet his creation points to him (Romans 1).
- B. Incarnation
 - 1. God became flesh, blood and bone (John 1).
 - 2. Jesus was fully human and fully divine.
- C. Resurrection
 - 1. When Jesus was resurrected, he had a physical body with holes still in his hands, feet, and side (John 20).
 - 2. Jesus' resurrection is a preview of God's promise for all creation, including our own bodies (1 Cor. 15, Rev 21).



II. What this tells us: The physical and the spiritual are fundamentally integrated.

- A. This pushes against two common views that pit physical and spiritual against one another.
- B. Materialism: Only the physical world is real.
- C. Spiritualism: Only the spiritual world is good, and our hope is to escape the material world.

III. In a sacramental worldview, we believe that...

- A. The physical and spiritual are inseparably joined.
- B. God works spiritual ends through physical means (John 6:54-57, 1 Peter 3:21).
- C. Redemption restores creation; grace perfects nature.

For the believer, the universe is a sacramental place where everything, from the flash of lightning and the crash of thunder (Psalm 29) to the industry of the ant (Proverbs 6:6), from the passionate embrace of husband and wife (Ephesians 5:31-32), to the sun's slow arc through the sky (Psalm 19), shows God's glory and love, and is further hallowed by Christ's own embodiment" (Leonard Vander Zee, Christ, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper).

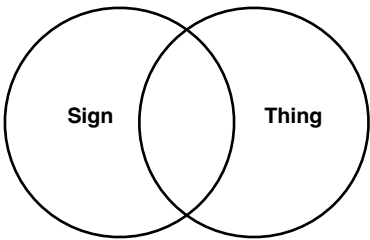
The Sacraments

I. What are sacraments?

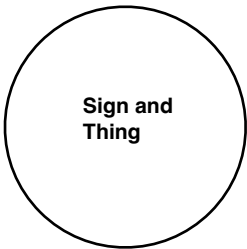
Q. 102 What is a sacrament? A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. God gives us the sign as a means by which we receive that grace and as a tangible assurance that we do in fact receive it (TBC, p. 59).

II. Development of thought on sacraments

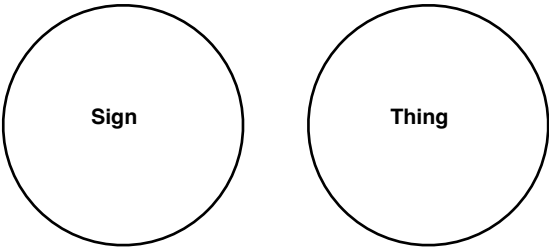
The Great Tradition until the Medieval Period



Thomas Aquinas and the Medieval Church



Post-Reformation Memorialist View



III. Spectrum of Christian beliefs about sacraments (with all due respect)

Baptist/Non-denom	Reformed/Anglican	Catholic
<u>Memorialism</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacraments are mere symbols that teach us about God.• Held by many Protestant evangelical churches.• Baptism is essentially one's testimony of coming to faith.• "Ordinance" rather than "sacrament."	<u>Real Presence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace.• Sacraments are effectual signs that, when administered and received properly (i.e. by faith), provide a means through which God works within us and through which we experience communion with him and our faith is nourished and sustained.	<u>Sacerdotalism</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sacraments have the objective power to convey the grace and blessings they signify.• Therefore, sacraments work automatically every time.• <i>Ex opere operado</i>: by the work done.• This is the view against which the Protestant Reformers fought.

Q. 103 How should you receive the sacraments? I should receive the sacraments by faith in Christ, with repentance and thanksgiving. Faith in Christ is necessary to receive the grace of the sacraments, and obedience to Christ is necessary for the benefits of the sacraments to bear fruit in my life (TBC, p. 56).

Baptism

Why do we practice baptism? Matthew 28:18-20

What is Baptism?

- I. An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.
 - A. Q. 126 What is the outward and visible sign in baptism? The outward and visible sign is water, in which candidates are baptized “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
 - B. Q. 127 What is the inward and spiritual grace given in baptism? The inward and spiritual grace is death to sin and new birth to righteousness, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. I am born a sinner by nature, separated from God. But in Baptism, through faith in Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, I am made a member of Christ's Body and adopted as God's child and heir.
- II. Baptism is a death and resurrection (Romans 6:1-3, Colossians 2:11-12)
 - We are united to Christ in his death and resurrection.
 - We receive the forgiveness of sins and are justified before God.
 - We are adopted into God's new covenant family, the church, the body of Christ.
 - We are filled and sealed with the Holy Spirit.
 - We are promised eternal life.
- III. Relationship between Baptism and Eucharist
 1. Baptism = covenant initiation. You're part of the family of God.
 2. Eucharist = covenant renewal. Bc you're part of the family, you feast at the family Table.
 3. Baptism is the wedding ring, Eucharist is marital intimacy.

Who is able to receive baptism?

- I. All who profess saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- II. Children of baptized believers.

Baptism is a door into a new family:

- I. In the OT, God formed Israel by establishing a covenant with Abraham and all his descendants.
 - A. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham believes in God and God credits his faith to him as righteousness — this is the foundation of the gospel, the promise that righteousness comes through faith, not works
 - B. And then God makes a promise to Abraham that he will do the same for all of Abraham's descendants —and that apply to his flesh and blood descendants, but to all who descend from Abraham by faith. That is the apostle Paul writes extensively about the new testament.
 - C. And then God gives a sign of that promise to Abraham and his descendants: Circumcision
- II. Circumcision is the sign that marks inclusion in this covenant.
 - A. It is a sign of God's promise that when someone puts their faith in him, he will credit their faith to them as righteousness.

- III. And Abraham was told to put this mark on himself and his male children
 - A. And all his descendants were told to put this mark on their male children soon after they were born
 - B. And whenever non-Israelites desired to “convert,” not only would the adult men be circumcized, but also their male children (Ex. 12:48).

- IV. The Church is the fulfillment of the promises originally given to Abraham and his descendants, and has inherited all the spiritual blessings (Galatians 3:29).
 - A. In the Church, baptism has taken the place of circumcision as the symbol of inclusion into God’s covenant community (Colossians 2:11-12).
 - B. While the old covenant sign is representative (given only to males), the new covenant sign of baptism applies to both men and women, since the new covenant is greater in its scope, blessings, and fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes to Jews and Gentiles, men and women.

- V. How do we know circumcision replaces baptism?
 - A. In Colossians 2 we see this most clearly when Paul refers to baptism as a “circumcision made without hands

- VI. Now some people will object that we do not see any children baptized in the New Testament
 - A. That is true, but what we do see are multiple “household baptisms” in the New Testament where entire families are baptized together (Acts 16:15, Acts 16:33-34, 1 Cor 1:16).
 - B. Church history simply assumes the practice of infant baptism since the time of the apostles all the way up until the protestant reformation

- VII. At Advent, our practice is to recognize that we have people who believe in infant baptism (pedo-baptists), and we also have people who believe that one should only be baptized after they have come to mature faith (credo-baptist)
 - A. We believe this is an issue on which we can disagree, and we encourage people to treat one another with Grace
 - B. Having said that, we ministers are instructed by the Book of Common prayer to encourage parents not to defer the baptism of their children, so we will do that from time to time in our church.

What happens at baptism?

- I. Candidates for baptism are asked a series of questions that lay a foundation for following Jesus throughout one’s life. In the case of infant baptism, parents answer on behalf of their children. Those questions fall into two categories:
 - A. Renunciations: That which we turn away from
 - 1. The Gospel begins with a call to repent, which means to turn away from sin and towards God (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38)
 - a) During baptism, candidates are asked: “Do you renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow nor be led by them?”
 - B. Affirmations: That which we turn toward
 - 1. Believing the gospel is more than mere intellectual assent. Pauls speaks “of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you” (1 Cor. 15:1-2).
 - a) At our baptism, we are asked to affirm the following:
 - (1) *Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?*
 - (2) *Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?*

(3) Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

- II. Candidates then make their baptismal vows using the Apostles' Creed.
- III. Candidates are then either immersed in water, or have it poured or sprinkled over their head.
 - A. In Anglican churches, this is followed by the priest making a sign of the cross on their forehead, accounting that they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- IV. Candidate receives a new status: part of the Church, the covenantal family of God.

Assignments:

- 1) Read the Baptism Liturgy, pp. 160-173 BCP.
- 2) Read "Infant Baptism: How I Changed My Mind."
- 3) Read the sections of the ACNA Catechism on sacraments and baptism, pp. 55-59.