

Worship and Catechesis

Liturgy instructs us in the doctrine of Christ and passes down the faith from generation to generation.

We begin this series on Liturgy and Catechesis with the Invocation. Quotes in boxes are from *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism*, by Dr. Martin Luther. Copies of Luther's entire essay are available in the church narthex for those who desire them.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

The Invocation is taken from Matthew 28:19. Look up this verse to see the context. This is the only place in the Bible where this "tripartite" name for God is found. Jesus gives us this to use when?

In the early Christian church this name was only heard pronounced by the pastor at Baptism. It was considered too holy to be used at any other time, and to this day is still spoken with great reverence and respect as the Holy name of God. It is appropriate to bow the head or cross oneself when speaking or hearing this name. The invocation returns us to our Baptism.

In the first place you give yourself up to the sacrament of baptism and to what it signifies. That is, you desire to die, together with your sins, and to be made new at the Last Day...

In the second place you pledge yourself to continue in this desire, and to slay your sin more and more as long as you live, even until your dying day.

Read John 3:1-6 What happens to you when you are Baptized?

Baptism is when we are born again as children of God. By being baptized we now have the right to call God, "Our Father." Baptism is where a person begins to worship God.

Read Titus 3:5: What does God do for us at Baptism and what does He give us?

What did Jesus receive in His Baptism according to Matthew 3:16?

Baptism is an external sign or token, which so separates us from all men not baptized that we are thereby known as a people of Christ, our Leader, under whose banner of the holy cross we continually fight against sin. In this holy sacrament we must therefore pay attention to three things: the sign, the significance of it, and the faith.

Read Acts 2:38-39: Again, what two things do we receive in Baptism?

Jesus died on the cross to forgive the sins of the world. How do we as individuals receive that forgiveness?

Baptism is the sign that God does not take our sins into account on the Day of Judgment. Baptism defines who we are as Christians and establishes the boundary of the church of Christ. Baptism is the beginning of our life in Christ and we continue to live in our Baptism until the day we die.

The significance of baptism is a blessed dying unto sin and a resurrection in the grace of God, so that the old man, conceived and born in sin, is there drowned, and a new man, born in grace, comes forth and rises. Thus St. Paul, in Titus 3[:5], calls baptism a “washing of regeneration,” since in this washing a person is born again and made new.

Forgiveness does not mean the removal of sin from our flesh, but that God does not hold our sin against us. In Baptism the righteousness of Christ is placed over our sin, just as a piece of clothing covers our bodies. By struggling against the sinful desires and temptations of our sinful nature throughout our life in this world we are living in our Baptism. We carry out this warfare against sin in Confession and Absolution and in the Lord’s Supper, constantly in prayer that the Holy Spirit would strengthen us against temptation and renew our hearts within us. This struggle goes on in the life of the believer until the day he dies and is buried. That is when our Baptism is complete for that is when we are completely rid of sin.

This significance of baptism—the dying or drowning of sin—is not fulfilled completely in this life. Indeed this does not happen until man passes through bodily death and completely decays to dust. As we can plainly see, the sacrament or sign of baptism is quickly over. But the spiritual baptism, the drowning of sin, which it signifies, lasts as long as we live and is completed only in death. Then it is that a person is completely sunk in baptism, and that which baptism signifies comes to pass.