
The Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism & Confirmation

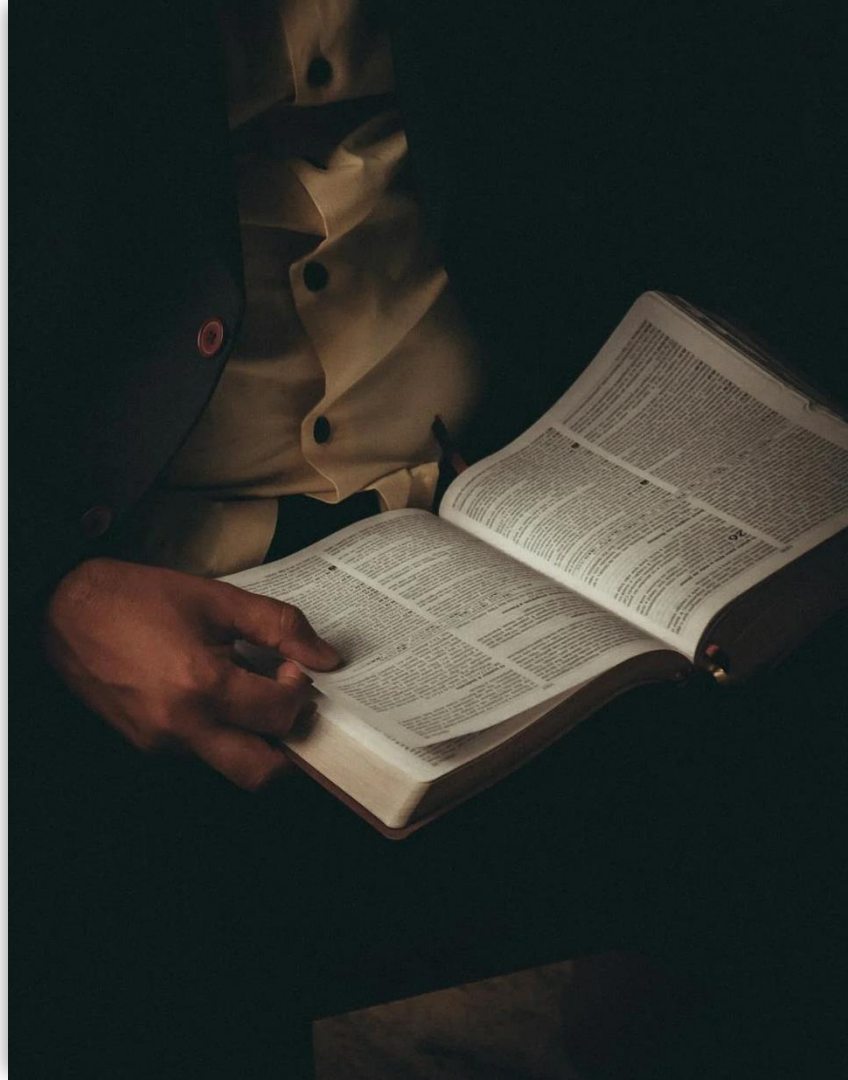


Scripture Readings

MALACHI 3:13–18; 4:1–2B:

Israel complains that serving God is pointless while the arrogant prosper, but the Lord listens to those who fear Him and records them in a “book of remembrance,” claiming them as His treasured possession. A coming day will consume evildoers like stubble, yet for those who revere His name, the “sun of righteousness” will rise with healing.

Luke 11:5–13: Jesus teaches through a midnight parable that persistent prayer moves even a reluctant friend, so how much more will a loving Father respond. Therefore, ask–seek–knock with trust, for God delights to give the greatest gift: the Holy Spirit to those who ask.



Summary of the Readings

The readings remind us of God's justice and mercy, the joy of following His law, and the assurance that God responds to persistent prayer. Malachi warns evildoers yet offers hope to those who revere God. The Psalm shows the fruitful life of the righteous. In Luke, Jesus urges trust in God's generosity, promising that the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask. These themes prepare us to explore Baptism and Confirmation, where God shares His Spirit with us as children of God.



What is Baptism and Confirmation?

CCC1213: Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*) and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

CCC1316 Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

The Catechumenate (RCIA)

- The Catechumenate is a structured RCIA journey towards Baptism.
- It includes multiple stages, climaxing at the Easter Vigil.
- It helps catechumens and lifelong Catholics deepen their faith.
- It teaches that conversion is lifelong, not a single event.

Socratic Questions

Why did Vatican II restore the Catechumenate?

Why is the Easter Vigil important in RCIA?

Biblical Images of Baptism

- Baptism is compared to being grafted onto Christ the vine.
- It means becoming a new creation and part of the Body of Christ.
- Baptism makes Christians temples of the Holy Spirit.
- It changes identity, making us children of God.

Socratic Questions

What does being 'grafted' onto Christ mean?

Why is Baptism described as new birth?

A Spiritual Re-birth

- Jesus described Baptism as being born of water and Spirit.
- It frees us from original sin and gives new life in Christ.
- Baptism begins a lifelong journey of faith and conversion.
- It symbolises dying to sin and rising to new life.

Socratic Questions

Why does the Church call Baptism a rebirth?

Is Baptism a one-time act?

Original Sin

- Original sin describes humanity's brokenness and inclination to sin.
- Baptism cleanses us from original sin and welcomes us into God's family.
- Even baptised people continue to struggle against sin.
- Salvation is God's gift, not something we can earn.

Socratic Questions

Does Baptism erase all effects of sin?

Why baptise infants who haven't sinned personally?

Via Pulchritudinis

🎨 Pietro Perugino — Baptism of Christ (c. 1482)
Location: Sistine Chapel, Vatican City • Medium: Fresco

Painted for Sixtus IV's Sistine Chapel, Perugino's fresco places Jesus and John the Baptist at the exact compositional centre, flanked by attendant angels and quiet onlookers along the Jordan. The clear contours, gentle Umbrian light, and poised symmetry create a mood of stillness as the dove of the Holy Spirit descends—an image of new birth that anticipates Christian initiation. Within the Chapel's wider programme, which sets episodes from Moses and Christ in dialogue, the scene proclaims continuity from promise to fulfilment, while the ordered space and measured gestures invite contemplative prayer on repentance, mercy, and the gift of the Spirit.



Dying and Rising with Christ

- Baptism joins us to Christ's death and resurrection.
- Early Christians used immersion to symbolise burial and new life.
- Baptism marks dying to sin and living for God.
- Paul teaches that Christians live a new life in Christ.

Socratic Questions

How does Baptism unite us with Christ's death and resurrection?

Why did early baptisms involve immersion?

The Baptism of Infants

- The early Church baptised entire households, possibly including children.
- Jesus welcomed children, affirming their place in God's kingdom.
- Infant Baptism begins a lifelong journey of faith.
- Parents and godparents pledge to guide the child's faith development.

Socratic Questions

Why does the Church baptise infants?

What is the role of parents and godparents in infant Baptism?

Community & Parental Responsibility

- Baptism connects individuals to the Christian community.
- Parents and godparents are the child's first teachers of faith.
- The entire community supports the newly baptised.
- Faith is lived out in family and parish life.

Socratic Questions

Why is Baptism more than a private event?

How do parents influence a child's faith?

Confirmation

- Confirmation completes Baptism by strengthening the Holy Spirit's gifts.
- It signifies a deeper commitment to live as a disciple of Christ.
- In ancient times, it was celebrated immediately after Baptism.
- Confirmation empowers believers for mission and service.

Socratic Questions

How does Confirmation relate to Baptism?

What does the bishop say during Confirmation?



Closing Prayer

Christ be with me, Christ
within me,
Christ behind me, Christ
before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to
win me,
Christ to comfort and
restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ
above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in
danger,
Christ in hearts of all that
love me,
Christ in mouth of friend
and stranger.

(St Patrick, 389–461)