

Worthy and Unworthy Candidates for Baptism

By Richard Joseph Michael Ibranyi

Worthy candidates for baptism believe in the Catholic faith, have contrition for their sins, and are preparing to be baptized into the Catholic Church

The gifts bestowed by the sacrament of baptism upon worthy recipients are as follows:

1. The indelible mark of baptism
2. Membership in the Catholic Church
3. And then the sanctifying grace of baptism which remits all their sins and all the punishment due to their sins

Worthy candidates for baptism believe in the Catholic faith and have contrition for their sins. Contrition includes sorrow for the sins they committed and a firm purpose of amendment.

Worthy candidates for baptism who have not yet overcome their mortal sins but are sorry for their sins and want to stop committing them can be baptized if they are in danger of death because they have the Catholic faith and contrition for their sins. But if they are not in danger of death, they should not be baptized until they stop committing their mortal sins because they would most likely fall into mortal sin shortly after they are baptized. They are similar to a member of the Catholic Church who has not yet overcome a mortal sin but has contrition and thus is sorry for his sin and has a firm purpose of amendment. When he confesses his sin to an authorized priest, his sin will be remitted, even though he may commit it again. However, if he becomes obstinate and thus does not have contrition or a firm purpose of amendment, his sin cannot be remitted even if an authorized priest gives him absolution. He is similar to an unworthy candidate for baptism who believes in the Catholic faith but does not have contrition for his sins.

Unworthy candidates for baptism who have the Catholic faith but not contrition for their sins

Unbaptized men who believe in the Catholic faith but do not have contrition for their sins are unworthy candidates for baptism. They must not be baptized even if they are in danger of death. If they do get baptized, they will receive the indelible mark and membership in the Catholic Church because they have the Catholic faith but will not get sanctifying grace and thus their sins and the punishment due to their sins will not be remitted until they worthily confess their sins to a Catholic priest,¹ which thus includes what they were lacking when they were baptized; that is, contrition for their sins. They will then get the sanctifying grace of baptism, which will remit all their sins and all the punishment due to their sins up to the point of their worthy confession.

Even though the *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine* contains heresies and Pius X who approved it was an apostate antipope, they teach the truth in this regard:

The Catechism of Christian Doctrine (aka *Catechism of Pius X*), 1912:

“14 Q. When the person who is being baptised is an adult, what dispositions should he have? A. An adult who is being baptised, besides faith, should have at least imperfect contrition for the mortal sins he may have committed.

“15 Q. If an adult in mortal sin was baptised without such sorrow, what would he receive? A. If an adult was baptised in mortal sin without such sorrow he would receive the character of Baptism and membership in the Catholic Church but not the remission of his sins nor sanctifying grace. And these two effects would be suspended, until the obstacle is removed by the sacrament of Penance.”

¹ If a Catholic priest is not available in the foreseeable future, they must confess their sins to God and he will remit them.

Unworthy candidates for baptism who do not profess belief the Catholic faith

Unbaptized men who do not profess belief Catholic faith (such as Protestants) are unworthy candidates for baptism. When they get baptized, they only get the indelible mark and thus do not get membership in the Catholic Church and the remission of their sins and the punishment due to their sins. They do not get the other gifts of baptism until they enter the Catholic Church by abjuration or a profession of the Catholic faith and thus become members of the Catholic Church. They will then get the sanctifying grace of baptism, which will then remit all their sins and punishment due to their sins previous to their membership in the Catholic Church:

St. Augustine, On Baptism against the Donatists, Book 1, 400: “[Chapter 3] 4. We affirm that baptism exists in the Catholic Church and that in it alone can it be rightly received... And we affirm that baptism exists among the Donatists but that with them it is not rightly received... [Chapter 12] 18. ...Let them understand that men may be baptized in communions severed from the Church in which Christ’s baptism is given and received in the said celebration of the sacrament, but that it will only then be of avail for the remission of sins when the recipient, being reconciled to the unity of the Church, is purged from the sacrilege of deceit by which his sins were retained and their remission prevented... So...in the case of the man who, while an enemy to the peace and love of Christ, received in any heresy or schism the baptism of Christ, which the schismatics in question had not lost from among them, though by his sacrilege his sins were not remitted, yet when he corrects his error and comes over to the communion and unity of the Church, he ought not to be again baptized; because by his very reconciliation to the peace of the Church he receives this benefit, that the sacrament now begins in unity to be of avail for the remission of his sins, which could not so avail him as received in schism.”²

Unworthy candidates for baptism who have the Catholic faith but are preparing to be baptized outside the Catholic Church

Unbaptized men who believe in the Catholic faith but are preparing to be baptized outside the Catholic Church and thus into a schismatic Church or church are baptized into schism and thus are unworthy candidates for baptism. Their baptism outside the Catholic Church gives them only the indelible mark and thus they do not get membership in the Catholic Church and the remission of their sins and the punishment due to their sins. They do not get the other gifts of baptism until they enter the Catholic Church by abjuration or a profession of the Catholic faith and thus become members of the Catholic Church. They will then get the sanctifying grace of baptism, which will remit all their sins and punishment due to their sins previous to their membership in the Catholic Church.

Unworthy candidates who profess belief in the Catholic faith but culpably doubt or deny a dogma

Candidates who profess belief in the Catholic faith but do not because they culpably doubt or deny a dogma must not be baptized because they are guilty of mortal sin without sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment and thus do not have contrition. If they attempt to get baptized into the Catholic Church, they only get the indelible mark but do not get membership in the Catholic Church because they culpably doubt or deny a dogma. And once baptized, they become formal heretics. They can only get the other gifts of baptism when they abjure their heresy and thus enter the Catholic Church; at which point they become members of the Catholic Church and get the sanctifying grace of baptism which remits all their sins and the punishment due to their sins.

² b. 1, c. 3.

Unworthy candidates for baptism who profess belief in the Catholic faith but are inculpably ignorant of a basic dogma

Candidates who profess belief in the Catholic faith but are inculpably ignorant of a basic dogma must not be baptized because one cannot be a member of the Catholic Church unless he knows and believes all the basic dogmas. If he does get baptized, he only gets the indelible mark. He will not get the other gifts of baptism until he knows and believes all the basic dogmas; at which point he will then get membership in the Catholic Church and get the sanctifying grace of baptism which will remit all of his sins and the punishment due to his sins.

The instant a man receives the sanctifying grace of baptism all his sins and the punishment due to his sins are remitted

A man can only receive the sanctifying grace of baptism once. At the instant a man receives the sanctifying grace of baptism all his sins and the punishment due to those sins are remitted from that point backward. That is what the sanctifying grace of baptism does.

Take the example of a validly baptized Protestant who was never a member of the Catholic Church and thus only has the indelible mark of baptism and never had the other gifts of baptism. If he enters the Catholic Church when he is thirty years old, he will then get membership in the Catholic Church and the sanctifying grace of baptism, at which point all his sins and the punishment due to those sins will be remitted that he was guilty of until then. Hence not only are the sins he committed and the punishment due to those sins before he was unworthily baptized remitted but also the ones after he was unworthily baptized until the time he entered the Catholic Church. The fact that he was guilty of original sin from the time of his unworthily baptism until he entered the Catholic Church is one proof of this. If his original sin were retroactively remitted to the time he was unworthily baptized, then he could not have been guilty of original sin after he was unworthily baptized. But he was guilty of original sin after he was unworthily baptized! Hence his original sin and all his other sins, as well as the punishment due to his sins, were remitted when he was thirty years old when he entered the Catholic Church and received the sanctifying grace of baptism. Therefore, he does not have to receive the sacrament of penance to have those sins remitted.

Beware, then, of the modern error (probably from the 18th century onward) that says that he has to confess to a priest the sins he committed from the time of his unworthily baptism until he entered the Catholic Church to have them remitted.

However, a member of the Catholic Church who falls away and thus is no longer a member of the Catholic Church can only have his sins remitted by the sanctifying grace of the sacrament of penance because he already received the sanctifying grace of baptism. He must first re-enter the Catholic Church by abjuration in order to become a member again, and then he must confess the sins he committed since he fell away to have them remitted. But the punishment due to his sins can only be remitted by works of satisfaction.

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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