

Covenant of Love

Group Outlines from Schoenstatt

It started at Baptism # 5

It started at Baptism

The Covenant of Love is a personal renewal of the Covenant made at Baptism. All of our Christian existence is founded in our Baptism, when two partners – Christ and each individual human soul – seal a Covenant what cannot be broken or erased.

When the waters of Baptism are poured over our heads we are taken out of this world in a certain sense. We no longer just belong to ourselves, we are given to the Lord and he has placed an indelible seal on our souls. Through this first Sacrament we are united to him and share in his Divine Life.

The reality of our Baptism becomes evident and vibrant in us when we recognize that we need the Lord; that we are nothing without him and without his love and Spirit in our lives. Baptism challenges us to strive to be always open for how God leads us and shows us the path that leads us to him and a remarkable life through faith. The Baptismal Covenant keeps us aware that we are loved and cherished, our lives are always in God's hands, and he will remain faithful to us no matter what happens. That is the Covenant of Baptism.

Our Covenant of Love with our Lady is a renewal of this baptismal reality. Through the Covenant with our Mother Thrice Admirable, we make our Baptism vibrant and present in our lifestyle and choices. The Covenant with the Blessed Mother in Schoenstatt strengthens and consolidates our Baptism. It makes plain that Baptism was not just a "nice ceremony" for babies, but it is the beginning of our lives of grace. It makes us a Christian with all the rights and obligations of discipleship.

We decide again for Jesus: We give ourselves to him as the Lord, we commit ourselves to his mission and we offer our hands and heart to build a better world that truly reveals the face of Christ. The Covenant of Love is a *new decision* to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour – he becomes the first in our hearts. We want more of him in our lives and we have experienced and felt the gift of his

grace that has motivated us to want the Covenant in our spiritual lives. This new decision for Christ and his Kingdom is key to understanding the beauty of the Covenant of love in Schoenstatt.

The story of the Covenant from Adam and Eve to the eternal and new Covenant in Jesus Christ becomes "my" personal story through Baptism. Most of us celebrate and remember our birthdays and other special occasions, but it is also worthwhile to remember the day when we were "born again" through the waters of Baptism and became icons of Christ.

The Greek word "Baptism" means to "plunge" or "immerse". Through this Sacrament we are "immersed" in the life of Christ, we become sons and daughters of the Eternal Father and we are filled with the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is a beginning, a sort of advance gift from God. Throughout our lives, we strive to make it bear fruit and become a real inspiration for our daily choices and lifestyle. Baptism shows itself in our striving for holiness and in the growth of God's life in us, because on our Baptism day we have 'put on Christ'. The reality of Baptism will be strengthened again through Confirmation.

Baptism is where it all started! Baptism is the Covenant event in the life of every Christian.

Questions for Reflection

1. Think about a recent Baptism in your family or circle of friends. Can you remember the different symbols of the Baptism Rite? What do they mean? What message to they contain for our Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother?
2. Through Baptism we have been "taken" from the world, "given" to Christ and "united" to him forever. How can I make myself more aware of this power and reality?

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