

SESSION 3

# NURTURING THE LIFE OF GRACE



REBORN

YOU, YOUR CHILD, AND THE HEART OF BAPTISM

*Nihil Obstat*: Dr. Joseph E. Burns, Ed.D. M.T.S., *Censor Deputatus*  
*Imprimatur*: Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L., Archbishop of Denver  
August, 2015

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Writers: Ashley Crane, Lucas Pollice

Media: Jon Ervin, Steve Flanigan, Justin Leddick, Kevin Mallory, Ted Mast, John Schmidt

Print Production/Graphic Design: Ann Diaz, Brenda Kraft, Jane Myers, Devin Schadt

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **Our Sunday Visitor**

Production of this project was made possible with the generous support of the *Our Sunday Visitor Institute*.

Augustine Institute  
6160 South Syracuse Way, Suite 310  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
Information: 303-937-4420  
Formed.org

Printed in the United States of America  
ISBN 978-0-986288-9-6

# NURTURING THE LIFE OF GRACE

## ▶ OPENING PRAYER

The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

Heavenly Father, in Baptism you have anointed us with the Holy Spirit to participate in Jesus' mission as Priest, Prophet, and King. Grant us the strength and courage to strive to be ever more fully conformed to Christ and his mission, that we may better guide and guard the children you have entrusted to our care and teaching. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



The Baptism of Pocahontas at Jamestown, Virginia, 1613 / HIP / Art Resource, NY

## FLYING HIGHER

*"Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy."*

—1 Peter 2:2–5, 9–10



## ▶ INTRODUCTION OF THE SESSION

**Most organizations have a mission statement of some sort.** It helps ensure that everyone is on the same page about the purpose, goals, and identity of the group. The Church, as the Body of Christ, has as her purpose and identity Christ's own mission—and each baptized Christian shares in that mission.

The last session explored the reasons why the Church baptizes infants and walked through the various parts and symbols of the Rite of Baptism to better understand the grace that this sacrament confers. In this session we will focus on the mission for which that grace prepares us: to share in the work of Jesus Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. The parents and godparents will play the primary roles in helping the newly baptized learn and live out this mission, but the whole family of the Church shares the responsibility of helping the new Christian along the way.

## ▶ VIDEO

THE FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE TOPICS COVERED IN THE VIDEO TEACHING.

### NURTURING THE LIFE OF GRACE

#### I. Baptism brings us into the community of faith

- A. Belonging to Christ means belonging to his Body, the Church
- B. The whole community of faith has a role to play in nurturing the newly baptized

#### II. Baptism: Grace and Mission

- A. Mission of the baptized is to continue the work of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King
- B. Laity are to bring the Gospel to the ordinary places of life and secular culture
- C. We are empowered and commissioned through Baptism, strengthened in Confirmation, sustained by the sacraments

#### III. Priest

- A. Christ is our eternal high priest; he offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to the Father
- B. Through Baptism we share in the priesthood of all the believers
  - 1. We are called to offer ourselves daily as a spiritual sacrifice to God
  - 2. We also offer our worship to God through the Mass and Sacraments and through daily prayer
- C. Parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of their children—to help them share in the Priestly mission of Jesus
  - 1. Prayer
  - 2. Reading Scripture
  - 3. Priority of faith in the family and household

#### IV. Prophet

- A. A prophet reveals God's Word and plan for salvation; Jesus is the full revelation of God
- B. All the baptized are called to evangelize and teach
- C. The power of the Gospel should shine out in family life

- D. Parents are the first proclaimers of the Gospel to their children

#### V. King

- A. We are meant to reign with Jesus over the power of sin in our lives
- B. The kingly mission of the baptized is a universal call to holiness
- C. Christians are meant to govern themselves and reign with Christ over sin in their lives through ongoing conversion
- D. Christians are also to exercise their kingly mission by following the example of Jesus as the servant-King who came to serve others
- E. Parents model a life of holiness and service to their children

#### VI. Godparents

- A. Being a godparent is a commitment to active participation in the spiritual growth of the baptized
- B. Requirements
  - 1. 16 years old or older
  - 2. A Catholic who has been confirmed and received the Eucharist
  - 3. Lives a life of faith, in good standing with the Catholic Church
  - 4. Intends to fulfill the duties of a godparent
- C. Duties
  - 1. Support the parents
  - 2. Represent the Church in the life of the child
  - 3. Nurture the child in the faith

#### VII. The entire Church community is responsible for being part of and nurturing the spiritual life of the newly baptized





## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is the Christian life meant to be lived out in community? What effect has the community of faith had on you?

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2. Which aspect of the threefold mission of Priest, Prophet, and King do you think is easiest to live out? Which do you think is hardest? Why?

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3. Who are your godparents? How have they impacted your faith? How do you see them impacting the faith of your child?

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### FLYING HIGHER

*"The whole Church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ."*

—CCC 1591



# ▶ PARENT/GODPARENT PROMISE

## TO THE PARENT

**At his or her Baptism, your child will be anointed with the Holy Spirit and receive the same calling and mission that Christ received: to be Priest, Prophet, and King.** As parent, you will be the primary teacher and example for your child in his or her life of faith. It's a daunting task, but you are perfectly equipped for it; you have already received the anointing of the same Holy Spirit and been called into this same mission.

**Consider the following words from St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation to the Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (*Christifideles Laici*):**

"A new aspect to the grace and dignity coming from Baptism is here introduced: the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.... Clearly we are the Body of Christ because we are all 'anointed' and in him are 'christs,' that is, 'anointed ones,' as well as Christ himself, 'The Anointed One.' In a certain way, then, it thus happens that with head and body the whole Christ is formed."

By virtue of your own Baptism, you are a little "christ," anointed with the same Holy Spirit in whom Jesus accomplished his mission. What your child needs from you is for you to let the Holy Spirit do his work that you may faithfully live out your part of the mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. It is simple, though not easy. What can you start doing now to live your baptismal mission more faithfully? What can you begin doing as a family now and in the years to come to teach your child about his or her priestly, prophetic, and kingly calling?

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The christening of the Princess Royal / HIP / Art Resource, NY



# TO THE GODPARENT

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**At his or her Baptism, your godchild will be anointed with the Holy Spirit and receive the same calling and mission that Christ received: to be Priest, Prophet, and King.** As a godparent, your responsibility to set an example of faith and teach your godchild about the Christian life comes second only to that of the parents. It's a daunting task, but you are perfectly equipped for it; you have already received the anointing of the same Holy Spirit and been called into this same mission.

## **Consider the following words from St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation to the Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (*Christifideles Laici*):**

"A new aspect to the grace and dignity coming from Baptism is here introduced: the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.... Clearly we are the Body of Christ because we are all 'anointed' and in him are 'christs,' that is, 'anointed ones,' as well as Christ himself, 'The Anointed One.' In a certain way, then, it thus happens that with head and body the whole Christ is formed."

By virtue of your own Baptism, you are a little "christ," anointed with the same Holy Spirit in whom Jesus accomplished his mission. What your godchild needs from you is for you to let the Holy Spirit do his work that you may faithfully live out your part of the mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. It is simple, though not easy. What can you start doing now to live your baptismal mission more faithfully? What can you begin doing now and in the years to come to support and encourage the parents of your godchild? What can you do to help teach your godchild about his or her priestly, prophetic, and kingly calling?

## FLYING HIGHER

*"The Second Vatican Council confirmed this tradition in its description of the missionary character of the entire People of God and of the apostolate of the laity in particular, emphasizing the specific contribution to missionary activity which they are called to make.... It is a right and duty based on their baptismal dignity, whereby 'the faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.'"* —St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*





## ▶ CLOSING PRAYER

**Almighty God**, in Baptism you have poured out your grace upon us to cleanse us of our sins and make us your children.  
 Filled with the Holy Spirit, you call us to share in the mission of your Son and live faithfully as members of his Body, the Church.  
 Help us to encourage one another as we each offer you our sacrifice of worship, share your Word and your love with those around us, and work to conquer sin in our own lives. Amen.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1253–1255, 1267–1274
- Father Robert Barron, *Priest, Prophet, King* (DVD or CD), available from Word on Fire Ministries
- Scott Hahn & Mike Aquilina, “Week 2 with St. Cyril of Jerusalem: On Baptism and Confirmation” in *Living the Mysteries: A Guide for Unfinished Christians*. Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington, IN. 2003.



The Baptism of St. Cornelius the Centurion  
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## NOTES

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