

The Flood and Baptism

Name: _____



Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1219

“O God, who by the outpouring of the flood foreshadowed regeneration, so that from the mystery of one and the same element of water would come an end to vice and a beginning of virtue.”¹

These words are used to bless the baptismal water during the Easter Vigil, the solemn Mass the Church celebrates the night before Easter. The priest prays these words as he blesses the waters he will use to baptize men and women coming into the Church.

In Baptism, God washes away all our sins and raises us to new life in Christ. Think about what else you know about the Sacrament of Baptism. **What similarities can you think of between the Flood and the Sacrament of Baptism?**

Write the letter of the Scripture passage next to the symbol or effect of Baptism to which it corresponds.

Noah and the Flood

The Sacrament of Baptism

A. The Waters Fell upon the Earth

“Rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights”
(Gen 7:12).

_____ We experience a new life of grace in Christ.

B. The Flood Cleansed the World from Evil

“The waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. . . . [God] blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the ground” (Gen 7:19, 23).

_____ We become members of one family within the Church.

C. God Gathered Noah and His Family Inside the Ark

“Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood”
(Gen 7:7).

_____ Water is poured over us while the priest/deacon baptizes us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

D. The Flood Was a Kind of “New Creation”

“God said to Noah, ‘Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you . . . and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth” (Gen 8:15, 17).

_____ We are cleansed of all sin.

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1219, quoting *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 45: Blessing of Water.

The account of the Flood also contains a key detail that prefigures Jesus' baptism and the Sacrament of Baptism in the Church today. Read the passage from Genesis below.

8 ⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made, ⁷and sent forth a raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the

whole earth. So he put forth his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; ¹¹and the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.

Gen 8:6-11

Now read Matthew 3:13–17 on page 2 of the Student Text and answer the question below.

What similar detail do you see in these two passages?

The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The dove released by Noah after the Flood returned with a fresh olive tree branch in its beak. This was a sign that the Flood was over and it was safe to exit the ark. There is also a dove in the account of Jesus' baptism. At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove and remained with him. In Baptism, we become temples of the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell in us and sanctify us.