Dear brothers and sisters,

And they continued… May these words bring to expression our forward determination and zeal after the wonderful Pentecost feast that we experienced. I was filled with gratitude and joy to see how many could come together to celebrate Pentecost and participate in the activities of the weekend. Thank you for your willingness to share the weekend with us and for your many prayers in preparing for this special event.

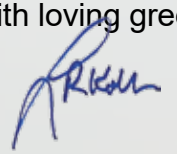
The Holy Spirit opened new understandings for all of us in this divine service.

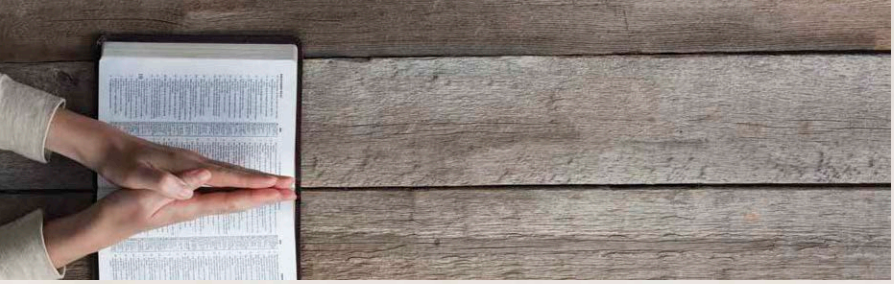
With our Holy Sealing we received a:

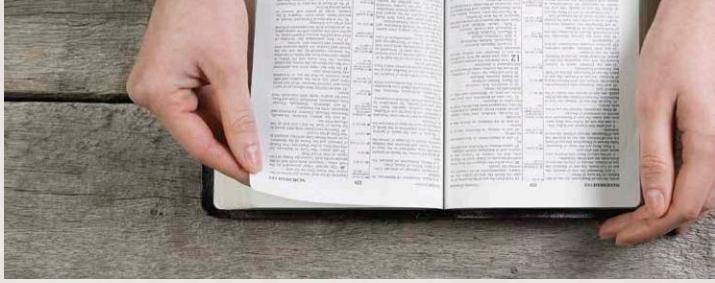
- **Seal** – the assurance we belong to God and He will always receive and accept us.
- **Guarantee** – the assurance that *as long as we remain in an active, close relationship with God,* He will provide all that we need to enter His kingdom, despite the weaknesses that exist in the visible church.
- **Promise** - the assurance that we will experience the resurrection of our body and enter the kingdom of God. This is the foundation of our hope for the future.
- **Pledge** - the assurance that we can already today receive part of our inheritance in experiencing a foretaste of the Kingdom by going deeper into the knowledge of our Father in the divine word, feeling His presence in the sacraments, and growing in His unity in our fellowship.
- **Calling** – the task to praise and witness Jesus Christ to those around us and profess His gospel and His return.

In light of these wonderful assurances and tasks, let us keep the promises we have made to the Eternal One when we were baptized, sealed, and confirmed, and thus, prove our faithfulness to Christ. We live under His gracious benefits and spiritual blessings!

With loving greetings,

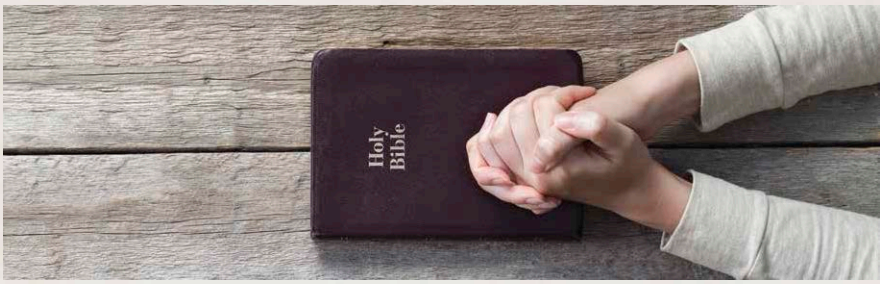






DOCTRINE & THEOLOGY

ORIGINAL SIN / GOD'S ELECT



ORIGINAL SIN OR INHERITED SIN?

Receiving the sacraments is part of being a Christian and they are a prerequisite for salvation. Because the sacraments are so essential to our understanding of Christianity and salvation, it is important that we deepen our knowledge of them. In this article, we are going to focus on Holy Baptism and the difference between original sin and inherited sin.

Holy Baptism with water dispensed in the Triune name of God allows us to enter into our first close relationship with Him. Through Holy Baptism, we become a Christian and part of the church of Christ. Baptism with water is an act of God that He alone does and it forever changes the relationship between God and a person. It is a true expression of His love for us.

Through baptism, original sin is washed away. This image of "washing away" brings to expression that God has removed the condition of permanent separation from Him that began with mankind's fall into sin. With original sin removed from us, we can enter into a relationship with God. Even though original sin in washed away in Holy Baptism, we still have the propensity to sin. Referred to as "concupiscence," the human inclination to sin persists after baptism as another consequence of the Fall. Concupiscence brings to light the brokenness that we all have as sinners, but it is also a reminder of our dependence on God and His grace in our lives.

BAPTISM FOREVER CHANGES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND US – IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF HIS LOVE

Now that we understand that original sin is our permanent remoteness from God and that Holy Baptism washes away that permanence, we can look at what inherited sin means.

The term "inherited sin" was coined by Saint Augustine. His study of Scripture led him to believe that all of Adam's descendants biologically inherited his sin through the sexual act of procreation, therefore equating sex with sin. Although we do not align with this concept, for many years, our church considered "inherited sin" to mean the sins we obtained from our parents and ancestors, which are washed away in our baptism. However, inherited sin cannot exist when we believe in the eternal love of God. In consideration of His limitless mercy, how could we reckon that He would allow a parent's sin to pass on to their children when He allows each soul to have an individual relationship with Him? ***Thus, we no longer use the term "inherited sin."***

Our relationship with God is the greatest gift of His grace. Once the connection is made with Him through baptism, it can never be severed. His love for us is so deep that even if we turn away from Him or become unfaithful, the opportunity for a relationship with Him, created by our baptism, will remain. How comforting it is that God expresses His love for us in this way! - VAA/LRK

**This article is written based on a presentation from the international church theologian, Dr. Reinhard Kiefer.*

The sacraments (23): The Lord's bountiful table

The New Testament says little about how, but all the more about why and what for. So how does the Bible interpret Holy Communion? Here is a look at the words of the one who instituted it, Jesus Christ.



"This is my body…"

The Greek term *soma* does not only mean "body" but also "organism", the whole human being. Everything that Jesus is, is sketched out in the previous sentence: "He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them", basically a summary of Jesus' life: He took on flesh, which was broken and given into death. *Holy Communion celebrates the incarnation of God.*

The body of Christ is also the church of those who are baptised in Him. It is a matter of fellowship, not only of coming together, but actually of coming together to be together. Apostle Paul makes this clear when he gives the Corinthians a piece of his mind because they did not look out for each other when celebrating the Lord's Supper. *Holy Communion celebrates the intimate fellowship of the congregation and its Lord.*

"…which is given for you."

Sometimes it means "give", sometimes "to give over something to someone", or even "betray". When Jesus told His disciples about His future or Judas Iscariot was branded as a traitor, the basic text speaks of *paradidomi*. This is the intensified form of "giving". *Holy Communion celebrates the ultimate surrender of Jesus Christ.*

"This is my blood…"

Mark and Matthew cite the words of Moses here when he sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial animals on the people as a sign of God's covenant with Israel. Paul and Luke, on the other hand, speak of a new covenant, as announced by the prophet Jeremiah. Either way, *Holy Communion celebrates God's covenant with man.*

"…which is shed for you…"

Again it says "for you". Jesus does not act for His own benefit, but to serve humankind. This is a reference to Isaiah's prophecy of the substitutionary suffering of the Servant of God, who gave His life as "an offering for sin". *Holy Communion celebrates the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*

“…for the forgiveness of sins.”

Matthew is the only one who makes this so clear. But the blood of the sacrifice of atonement and the suffering of the Servant of God leave no doubt that this is also what the three other biblical witnesses mean: *Holy Communion celebrates Jesus Christ’s act of redemption.*

“Do this in remembrance of Me.”

Paul and Luke are the only ones who convey the command of Jesus to repeat His actions. According to Acts, already the early church in Jerusalem practised the breaking of bread and was steadfast in it—the early form of Holy Communion. *Holy Communion celebrates the past with Jesus Christ.*

“For as often as… you proclaim the Lord’s death…”

Proclaim (*katangello*) is not a silent and introverted kind of remembrance, but a loud declaration. And this does not happen in the past, but with every repetition, over and over again in the here and now. *Holy Communion celebrates our profession of faith in Jesus Christ and His presence.*

“…till He comes.”

Paul is the only one who makes reference to the return of Christ, but the three Evangelists go even a little further and set their sights on the future kingdom of God by citing Jesus’ vow to abstain from wine (“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”). *Holy Communion celebrates the future with Jesus Christ.*

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood…”

The gospel of John does not report on the Last Supper as such, but nowhere else does it become so drastically clear just how indispensable Holy Communion is: only he who “chews” His flesh, so the literal translation, “has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day”. *Holy Communion celebrates the eternal redemption in Jesus Christ.*

This already suggests a concept of sacrament, which the Church Fathers came to define only later. Before that the celebration of Holy Communion gave rise to Christian worship and divine service. This is what we will explore in the upcoming parts of this series.

ARTICLE INFO

Author:	Andreas Rother
Date:	26.11.2020
Keywords:	sacraments, Holy Communion

© 2022 New Apostolic Church International