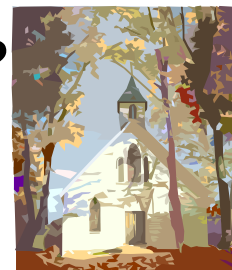


## 4

# WHAT'S THE "CHURCH" GOT TO DO WITH BAPTISM?



1) 1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 30 :

*The comments on this passage are fairly clear in that they are spelled out in the text. What remains is to **apply them** to the world **today**, and in particular to your parish, your community / family and the issues that people there are working through.*

**The main points that Paul is making are:**

- **God is the origin** of all these blessings and **not our** own goodness or cleverness or holiness;
- Paul makes it very clear that **there are no 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class Christians** (there never have been and there never will be);
- **God loves all** those who follow Jesus equally and without favouritism;
- All "our" goodness is an **undeserved gift from God** who gives it graciously, freely, and abundantly;
- **God is longing to see us use** whatever we're good at for the benefit of all, because that's what the gifts are given for;

*the gifts **are not** for our personal glory,  
but to glorify God and to bless others.  
Service, not status, is our calling.*

**Please Note:**

*The gifts of the Spirit have only been mentioned here because they occur in the passage and because they are gifts of God like Baptism itself.*

*Do not focus on the gifts or the Holy Spirit here – that is a worthy subject for another course. Refer questions to the clergy.*

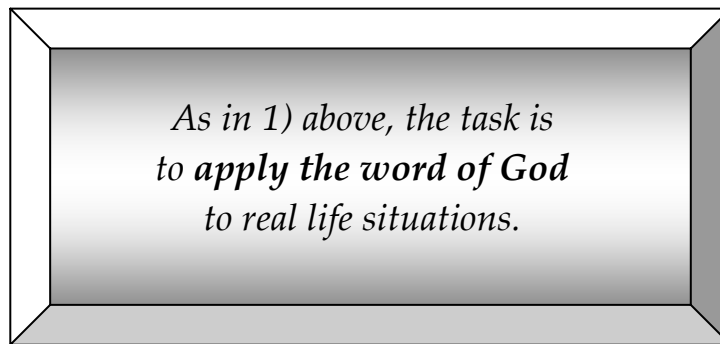
*Please remain focused on **Baptism**.*

- No two of us are alike spiritually any more than we are physically or mentally. (Each of us is called to live to our own God-given identity in community with others. Working together like this, reveals the richness of God's creation.)

***This happens because there is only one God who has given us one baptism in which we die and rise with the one Jesus Christ and are filled with the one Holy Spirit. This is the way God planned it.***

***Nobody has it all. We need each other.***

## 2) *Ephesians 2: 19-22*



**Nobody can claim not to need God's grace or mercy.** Without these we are in trouble.

We may not all have committed the same sins. Some sins may have had a greater impact on society than others. At one level the debate is not about which sin is the greater, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (*Romans 3: 23*).

**Sin** is about doing things our way and **not God's way**. All sin is an insult to God whether the results in society are large or small.

Notwithstanding our sin, **God took pity on us**. He sent Jesus to restore what we had destroyed. It cost Jesus His life. God didn't have to do this; God **didn't have to** do anything. God **did** this out of love for you and me.

God did away with everything that cut us off from Him and the life He intended for us. **God re-created us** so that we again have the freedom to choose to do right. All of this is the completed work of Jesus.

We can enjoy these benefits now, today, and for ever. It all centres on the work of **Jesus; it's all about Him**. It is only as we live in Jesus and in His way that we are able to live out what He has given us – a unity in the most amazing and creative diversity – **without resentment, envy, rivalry, or hatred**.

### 3) And So?

- ❖ *Many good, positive and wonderful things, the ideals of the Church, cannot always be realised because of sin*
- ❖ *Sin = the active or passive refusal to co-operate with the wonderfully good purposes of God for us and the rest of creation*
- ❖ *People refuse to take responsibility for their thoughts, words, and deeds, but blame God and other people for the results*
- ❖ *Baptism undoes all of this **only** as we open our lives more and more to God daily*

#### **Suggestion:**

*You could now appropriately connect the **And So?** section to the local needs and issues of your parish, or area, or community.*

*e.g. what **good things are happening** because people **are living out** their baptismal promises to God;*

*what **bad things are happening** because people **are not living out** their baptismal promises to God;*

*what **good things could be happening** if more people **lived out** their baptismal promises to God?*

**Baptism isn't the magic of a moment,**  
**but the journey of a lifetime.**