

Review Article

Water Baptism as the Most Essential Process of Initiation of the Sacrament for the Salvation of Humans

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Abstract: The author in this research article viewed that water supports everything, endures everything, welcomes and shelters everything. God behaves in the same way, and that is why water is a sacrament of God, revealing, reminding, pointing to, sending humans back to God through sacramental symbols such as water. The symbol of water in baptism as in creation, combines the two old meaning of water as both life-giving and death-giving. Water as a symbol is that kind of reality which in being itself known, leads humans to know something beyond itself. As symbol, water differs from simple sign because of the richness of consciousness it effects. It does not only give an understanding, it touches our imaginations, emotions, desires, love, and it triggers our decisions and our activity. Water as symbol has this power to resonate with the deeper levels of consciousness. It is in this sense then that water is a symbol of sacrament for humans. The author discussed the historical development of sacrament. The celebration of the water-sacrament liberates humans both in spirit and body. Baptism in the Christian tradition mostly has always been celebrated with a washing in water. The author looked at water from perspective of sacrament connecting humans symbolically with the creator through art work. Each painting of Meinrad Craighead images something of divine mystery, water reveals the mystery of creation, and art work links humans in theologizing. The water-sacrament of John was a rite of preparation for the age to come, the baptism inaugurated by Jesus was a rite of entry into the new age. Many people received the spirit-sacrament after the resurrection at Pentecost. After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples received baptism with the Lord's command. After Jesus passed through life and death that the way to the Father was opened to the rest of human race.

Keywords: Water, sacrament, symbols, sign, life-giving and death-giving.

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INTRODUCTION

Water is the like piece of land people cultivate, build on and make meaning of. Sometimes the land is destroyed with its wrong use but it does not lose its meaningfulness as land. The sea is like the land. People travel on the water, they fish in the sea, fight on the sea waters, generate the sea water for many purposes, sun shines on the sea, wind comes on the sea etc. But the sea remains what it is. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, the darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters (Gen 1. 1-2). Water is not disturbed by whatever is done to it by humans, it is like God.

It supports everything, endures everything, and welcome and shelters everything. God behaves in the same way, and that is why water is a sacrament of God, revealing, reminding, pointing to, sending humans back to God through sacramental symbols such as water. The symbols of water in baptism as in creation, combines the twofold meaning of water as both life-giving and death-giving. Water in the Hebrew scriptures is the sources of life. The blessed one is "like a tree planted near running water" (Ps 1.3).

We can basically speak of symbols as signs. Signs are that kind of reality which, in being themselves known, lead humans to know about something beyond themselves. Symbols differ from simple signs because of the richness of consciousness they effect. They not only

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give us information and understanding, they touch our imaginations, emotions, desires, and love and they trigger our decisions and our activity. Water as a symbol or sacrament has this power to resonate with these deeper levels of our consciousness. Persons, things, words, happenings can be or become symbols. It is in this thinking then that water as a symbol of sacrament for humans. Water then, is seen in baptism as a symbol of washing and purifying with the purpose of making a new human person in a new reality of life. Therefore, water is a sacrament of life for humans. Words effect meaning on the symbols we use, and a presence is felt. The presence is a reality grounded in some form of communication from one person to another.

Sacrament comes from the Latin word, “Sacramentum” and the Greek word “Mysterion.” It signifies one of the seven central liturgical rites of the church through which participants experience the paschal mystery of Christ, and are formed into the body and grow in the life of grace. The few evidences of “mystery” in the Old Testament refer to God’s saving action enacted in history which gives wisdom to save (Wis 6.22). In St. Paul’s writing “mysterion” often refers to Christ who reveals the divine will to save all people, who himself is the mystery through whom all things are restored, and who dwells in those who believe (cf. 1 Cor 2. 7-10, Rm 16. 25-26 etc.). While the rites of baptism and eucharist were known in the New Testament era (Acts 2.41, 1 Cor 11. 17-34) and their usage was reflected in New Testament texts, neither of them was called a sacrament at this time.

For some centuries, Christians have always focused the meaning of sacrament on certain ritual actions (baptism, eucharist etc.), action that are considered especially “religious” (Angiola E. 2021). For the celebration of sacraments was the celebration of the those ultimate “mysteries” that had been revealed in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. These mysteries embraced all the deepest mystery of human life, of the created universe, and even of God. Sacramental liturgies brought men and women into a world beyond the purely human, into the realm of the sacred, into contact with divine power and, it was hoped, divine mercy and grace.

Christians seems always to retain the notion that there was something fundamentally human about sacraments. While these mystery celebrations were intended to worship and acknowledge God, they were also meant to benefit the humans who performed them. This insight was crystallized into the century’s old adage, “sacraments exist for people” (sacramenta pro populo). Even though this principle was often more voiced than observed, it still exposed the realization that Christians were meant to benefit from sacraments, that such benefit was the principal reason for sacramental liturgy.

In this paper, I intend to discuss the Historical Development of Sacrament, Water as symbol (of baptism), the celebration of the water- Sacrament, Some considerations, and conclusion. I do not intend exhausting this topic. However, I hope the discussion will throw light and insights to this ministry of ours which we celebrate all the times. It is a Water-sacrament which needs to liberate humans both in spirit and body, and not enslave them with supposed “church rules”.

Historical Development of Sacrament

The first indication of reflection on sacraments is in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers in the polemic against the Gnostics and Manichees. The Christian defense of the goodness of nature and of sensible things begins with the fact that they are used in celebration which purify and sanctify the participants. Justin Martyr (d. 165), described the reality both baptism and eucharist but he did not use the word sacrament. The baptized were called “reborn” and “enlightened” (Cullen, 2024).

Tertullian (d. 220) introduced the term sacrament into Christian language when speaking about Christian initiation. He understood the word to mean that which makes holy, the consecration itself, that which is consecrated and that to whom one is consecrated itself, that which is consecrated and that to whom one is consecrated. He understood “word” to be the word of God which has a determinative role in sacraments as do the things used in their celebration. Under the influence of neo-platonism some authors begin to speak of the visible dimension as a symbol of the divine operating in sacrament.

In the 4th and 5th centuries, catechesis ascribed to St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 387), St. Ambrose (d. 397), St. John Chrysostom (d. 407), and Theodore described the various rites of initiation and elaborated on their meaning. While a certain fluidity of terminology existed, some terms used at this time influenced later theological reflection. These included “typos and aletheia” signifying symbol and reality. What occurred in water baptism by way of symbolic initiation of Christ insures, the reality of salvation enacted in the rite. Baptism symbolizes Christ’s suffering and makes them present through the use of symbol water. Augustine (d. 430) reflected fluid notion of sacrament and mystery, which words he allied closely with the terms “figura,” “allegoria,” “prophetia,” “symbolum” etc. He called sacrament a sacred sign, a “signaculum”, a visible word. He stated that “one joins the word to the material element, and behold the sacrament, that is a kind of visible work.” Sacraments are sacred signs, “when signs refer themselves to divine reality, they are called sacraments (Cullen, M. (2024). Keeping the conversation open: Open House and Vatican II. *Theology in Scotland*, 31(1), 45-55.).

From the sixth to the twelfth century theologian were influenced by the thought of Augustine.

Isidore of Seville (d.636) stated that there were three sacraments baptism, chrism and eucharist. He said that beneath the covering of bodily things used in these sacred nations, “the divine power works secretly the salvation proper to these same sacraments,” these are fruitful when administered in the church by the Holy Spirit who works the effects of the sacrament (Cullen, M. (2024). Keeping the conversation open: Open House and Vatican II. *Theology in Scotland*, 31(1), 45-55.). Theologians continued to battle with the numbers of sacraments. Peter Damian (d.1142) spoke of twelve Sacrament; Peter Abelard (d.1142) distinguished between major and minor Sacraments; Bernard (d.1153) noted eleven sacraments. Hugu of St. Victor (d.1141) wrote that a sacrament “is a corporeal or material element set before the external senses, representing by similitude, signifying by institution and containing by sanctification, some invisible and spiritual grace” (De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei P. IX C.2; P.L. 176, 317B). Hugu of St. Victor and William of Auxerre maintained that sacraments contain grace in the sense that God himself operates through sacraments. Lombard specified causality as essential to an understanding of sacraments by adding this notion to the axiom that a sacrament is “invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma,” that is a sacrament is a visible form of an invisible grace and that a sacrament “efficit quod figura” that is, a sacrament produces which it represents. Lombard said the sacraments were seven, and that seven was a significant number for completion, totality and inclusiveness. Seven is appropriate for the number of sacraments since it is the sum of three, the symbol for the divine, and four, a symbol of cosmic perfection. Thus, seven sacraments demonstrate God’s saving presence at all times.

Not every theologian agreed with Lombard’s notion of causality, though Aquinas theory of instrumental causality was most influential. What was agreed upon was the fact that Christian sacraments were efficacious “ex opere operato” (this technical term “by work done” means that sacrament are effective by means of the sacramental rite itself not because of the worthiness of minister or participant), and not just “ex opere operantis (this technical term “by the work of the doer” means that the effectiveness of sacraments depends on the moral rectitude of minister or participant. Thomas Aquinas very much influenced by the work of Augustine, Dionysius, Hugu of St. Victor and Lombard saw the function of sacraments as initiating, restoring, preserving or intensifying the life of grace in believers. Sacraments incorporate the Christian into the body of Christian and confer the spirits promised by the risen Christ. Aquinas stated that, as a sign a sacrament has threefold function: It is at once commemorative of that which has gone before, namely the passion of Christ, namely grace, and prognostic, that is a foretelling of future glory” (Cullen, M. (2024). Keeping the conversation open: Open House and Vatican II. *Theology in Scotland*, 31(1), 45-55.).

The Council of Florence (1438-1445) gave us the first authoritative statement of the church on the sacraments. As a declaration concerning essential element of the sacraments, it is taken almost verbatim from Aquinas. Reformers of the sixteenth century attacked abuses in sacramental doctrine and liturgical practice. The council of Trent (1545-63) clarified sacramental questions in the seventh session (1547) gave a doctrinal statement on the eucharist in the thirteenth (1551) debated eucharistic doctrine and practice in the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions (1562), discussed orders at the twenty-third session (1563) and the reformed marriage legislation at the twenty-fourth session (1563). The statement of Trent can be said to be clarification on controverted matters, not a systematic treatment of sacraments.

The twentieth century was undoubtedly the main stimulus within the church for the contemporary renewal of sacramental practice and for a revived understanding of sacraments. The work of liturgical scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was responsible for a reawakening of the importance of liturgy as public worship which by its nature required the active participation of the participants. What surfaced in this period was a strong ecclesial foundation for liturgy and sacraments. The patristic adage, “in the sacraments the church generates its children, but it is also itself generated,” was restored to its rightful position after centuries when teaching on sacraments was codified theologically, juridically and rubrically.

Water Sacrament

Baptism in Christian tradition has always been celebrated with a washing in water. One would clearly be outside the Christian teaching if some other media were used. Francisco a. p. Sola, JS, in the theological textbook published on the very eve of Vatican II, mentions that a few have gone against this procedure of water baptism in the past. He mentioned some Gnostic groups in early church history and the Manichaeans who spiritualized baptism so much that natural water was eliminated. In the Middle Ages he indicated that some Cathari and Albigensians were similar in their approach to the baptismal ritual. Here and there, other media have been promoted by splinter group- oil with water, wine beer etc. All of these the Christian community has judged unacceptable (Pellican, P. (2021). A theology of confirmation from the Canon of Scripture.).

The form of the washing has also been varied, and there is really on one way that must be used, that is immersion in water, or pouring water over the head or forehead, or simply sprinkling with water. All three forms have the course of the Christian era been used and approved by the Christian community and are still used today. We read from the seventh chapter of the ancient Judaeo-Christian compilation called the didache about baptism:

Concerning baptism, baptize in this way. Having first rehearsed all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. But if you have no living water, baptize into other water; and, if thou canst not in cold, in warm. If you have neither, pour water thrice on the head in the name, etc... Before the baptism let the baptizer and the baptized fast, and others if they can. And order the baptized to fast one or two days before.... (Searle, 1980; cf Milner, 2024).

The water-sacrament of John (baptism) was a rite of preparation for the age to come; the baptism inaugurated by Jesus was a rite of entry into the new age. The analogy will be like the difficulty one takes to wash oneself after hard work and dirt to the refreshed self and strength one gets after the wash. In Mark's 1.8, we hear of John, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." It is the presence among us of the creative and redemptive Spirit of God which characterizes the era, and it was fitting enough that the presence of the Spirit was first manifested in the presence of John the Baptist when Jesus came to submit to his baptism in the Jordan. John testified, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven and it remained on him. I myself did not know, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descends and remains, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' (Jn 1.32-33). The baptism of John was water sacrament. Many people recovered the water sacrament (baptism), it was after the resurrection at Pentecost that people received the Spirit sacrament (baptism). It was not until the resurrection of the Lord that the disciples began to baptize, in accordance with the lord's command (Mt 28.19). It was not until Jesus had passed through life and death and so into the glory of the Father that the way to the Father was opened for the rest of human race. Only then, as Jesus had promised, was the Spirit given to others to "complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace" (Jn 14.12; 26, 7.39).

After Christ glorification, the apostles themselves baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.5), began to preach the Good News of what God had done, with conviction and with power. The people who had heard them "were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.37-38).

Luke in his Gospel claims that three thousand were added to their number. Even if this incident was untypical, it seemed as though Christian baptism was administered with little preparation and less formality. The individuals and household mentioned in Acts such as the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8.26-39), or the family of Cornelius (Acts 10.47-48), or Paul's jailer (16.30-33) seemed to have been baptized with minimum of

instruction. There is a sense of urgency about it all, an almost irresistible divine of the Spirit which seizes people as they hear the Gospel preached, so that they are overcome with conviction concerning the truth of what they hear and submit to the Lordship of Jesus and are baptized without further ado. This is what is meant by "baptism in the name of Jesus" This is no longer water baptism (John's baptism) or a Jewish ritual washing, but a public profession of faith in commitment to God who had worked new wonders through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Thus, John's writing tends to revolve around the theme of baptismal rebirth (Jn 3.1-21, iJn 3.9 etc.) which makes us children of God (1Jn 3.1ff) and through baptism in water and the Spirit. If this was the way baptism was administered from the above accounts we have considered, why the long period of preparation for adults even when they proved themselves ready for the sacrament? Does the church in some parts of the world not enslaving people instead of setting them free by this water sacrament?

Some Considerations

The Water-Spirit sacrament (baptism) as I may call it, is for humans and is administered to by humans. Jesus as God and man founded a church of humans, and his sacraments for humans are meant to liberate humans and make them fully humans by the reception of the sacraments. We have been discussing baptism as water-sacrament. For some reason or the other a few individuals have not been comfortable with the way the water-sacrament (baptism) is at times administered to the faithful either as adult or families seeking the sacrament for their wards let us consider a quotation from Karl Rahner (2023). *The need and the blessing of prayer*. Liturgical Press begin with:

Every construction of the future which involve man's reason
And creative mind; every effort made to free man as fully as possible
from slavery to nature; the whole process of the socialization of existence
Which aims at producing for each and every person the maximum of liberty -
all this presents for Christianity a task written in the very nature of man
such as God has willed it to be. Christianity sees all this as an obligation which
is an integral part of its religious behavior, properly so called, the latter being
in effect simply human freedom opening itself, in faith and hope, to the absolute
future. It is Christian faith in an absolute future promised to everyone, which
constitutes the only foundation for the absolute value of each and every person.
It therefore engenders a conviction calculated to give to secular possible social order,

their deepest and most assured foundation (Bertrand de Margerie, 1977; cf. Biliniewicz, M. (2023)

The water -spirit sacrament (baptism) is therefore, at once the presence of the absolute future of man and the redemptive divinization of his fundamental design to be himself and to be all things. This is what is signified and effected for the adult person by the reception of the sacrament of water-spirit called initiation. Now, it is not with faith of their parents, which is often deficient, but in the faith of the church, according to saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, that infants are baptized. They are thus inserted into the choice of the whole people of God for the development of the world; or more accurately, they are thus integrated with Christians own choice for the paschal and sacrificial development of His body which is the church. For these infants, the grace of their baptism is a grace of growth which tends towards its own fullness.

Infant baptism has been ordinary experience of Christian initiation for Catholics (Furlong, 2020). *The identity of John the Evangelist: revision and reinterpretation in early Christian sources*. Rowman & Littlefield. However, Vatican II established adult initiation as the norm, and the RCIA has reinforced this position in practice, even though in most places infant baptism is still the most familiar form of the sacrament. Some people want their children be initiated as infants and others too don't like the idea. They would rather prefer the child to be initiated as adults. In my culture, we have a traditional religious initiation rite into our traditional religious community. Adults are initiated into this community or group not children. They have a period of preparation which lasts two weeks, and the people to be initiated are in reclusion till the eve of the initiation. They are fully aware of what they are doing not somebody standing in for them. So is the adult who is initiated into Christian community.

At times an ecumenical issue arises from the expectation of the Roman Catholic Church that children born of an ecumenical marriage will be baptized and raised as Roman Catholics. Although the church's current expectation is more open and accommodating than its pre-Vatican II position, it can still cause stress for a husband and wife in ecumenical marriage. Some want their children to be baptized but they have no time to do the instructions as the church wants, because of work situation. How does the church treat such cases? Let us look at this case as an example. Maris has been in the field of religious education for some time. For two years, she directed the catechumenate in her parish and was asked to coordinate the RCIA (Dudas, P. M. (2023). for the diocese. Although she saw it as a real opportunity for a woman to take leadership in the diocesan church, she was seven months pregnant with her first child. The coordinator of sacramental preparation programs in the parish asked Maris which of the pre-baptism sessions she

and the husband Burns would be attending. Maris surprised the coordinator by indicating that they would not be attending any of the sessions because she and Burns had decided not to have their child baptized.

Their rationale was that children born of baptized and practicing Christian parents already live in a Christian environment that the equivalent of a catechumenate. Just as a child develops naturally and gradually, so too a child's faith develops. The various stages should be marked by appropriate rituals such as enrollment and catechesis, but baptismal initiation should occur when the child has become an adult and can make a mature decision about baptism (Milner, L., 2024). The question I may ask here is, what kind of Pastoral care/assistance can be given to Maris and Burns if there is anything regarding the position they have taken concerning Water-Spirit sacrament (baptism)? If the church allows infants baptism, why does it refuse other innocent infants baptism at some places? In my diocese at home, it has been the practice that children born out of wedlock can't receive water baptism (parents') until they grow up and learn the catechism before they are baptized. Perhaps, the rule might have been changed by now. Certain adults also request baptism but they are refused because they can't follow the whole period of the instructions or because they can't memorize the catechism. The people who listen to Peter when he asked them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2.37-38) did not suffer so much an ordeal the church allows catechumens to go through. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8. 26-39), the family of Cornelius Acts 10.47-48) OR Paul's jailer (Acts 16.30-33) seemed to have baptized with minimum of instruction. Why can't the church help adults who have the desire and the faith but who find it difficult to follow our programs of instruction?

Brunk T. (2020), talked about human tension underlying baptism. The tensions are those evoked by a person's entry into a new group and the discovery of a new type of relationship; they constitute a passage and a sort of rebirth. Brunk (2020) said that birth can be defined in cultural terms as, the entry into a community is a way of restructuring or renewing this network of human relation and, therefore, is indeed a new birth. I see the tension in three ways; the person to be baptized, the church community and the church. In order to resolve the tension, there has to be an understanding and compromise between all three parties.

Imaging the Divine in Arts

Let us look at water from another perspective like the sacrament connecting humans symbolically with the Creator through art work. Each painting of Meinrad Craighead for me images something of a divine mystery with its use of different images. She tries with stimulation to decode the world through images and writings. Her work is enticing, enjoyable, and

appreciative. I like very much her work because of the use of image in relation to the Divine. Water reveals to us the divine mystery at creation. I may think like Meinrad and feel that talking about arts is linking humans in theologizing. She prefers talking about God using an image of a caring mother. However, she uses images we are all familiar with to speak of the divine nature of God. Her childhood upbringing as a catholic girl certainly had much influence on her later life as an artist as we can read from the "Remembering the Litany." With a catholic background, I grew up in a village surrounded by a river, with mountains and caves, good natural vegetations, and to the south a sea. We were told powerful stories about those mountains, caves, rivers, and animals that lived around there. There is a mystery which surrounds them in their quietude. The art work of Meinrad Craighead gave me a good connection with the stories told us when we were children. Her art and the prayers that go with them are not abstract but something real and down to earth. To speak of God of the sun, river or mountain someone will consider you crazy unless those who have that language. Each morning as the sun rises Craighead enters her studio and she paints within the seeing eye of a caring mother. She says, "What more may I say of this mother than she keeps eyes on me. As her eye gives birth to me, my eyes bring out beauty of my image." P24. She sees in her art a mother who feeds all from her abundant lap like Jesus through water and the spirit of creation cares for every adopted child by water sacrament.

She beautifully illustrates her art work with what is called "O eternal Water" a kind of being with waterfall at each side. The continuous fall of the water produces a river which becomes an external source of life for humans, animals, and birds. Jesus is the source of life through the *font* of water for all humans through water-baptism (Rodríguez, J. M. F. (2020). Craighead says of the water, "Until I have given the words to the river, they are not min. Until they are thrown into the flow, washed and bedded in her body. I do not trust their purity. The water absorbs the sounds and the timeless seemingly continues, running with purpose to union with all the waters circling this sweet earth. In the water the sounds go "round and round" like in the command of Jesus to his disciples, the cry of repentance and baptism in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit goes round to all nations.

Craighead puts her monastic life experienced in Europe into art painting. In the monastery she climbs a high red brick wall with a wired fence on top, trying to respond to a call out there in the world. A river by the monastery and a big tree with a flicker represent the reality of life. The hands outstretched is a sign of readiness to respond to a call which is the beginning of another life commitment, that is to creative imagination and art work as an artist.

With Craighead, I am beginning to appreciate and find meaning in arts. Her Litany of the Great River reminds me of the Canticle of Daniel (3.57-88,56) that we say Sunday week one during morning prayer. Let all creatures praise the Lord. O heavens bless the Lord. All you, waters above the heavens, bless the Lord. Sun, and Moon, Bless the Lord etc. Craighead has simplified all that with art especially in the litany of the great River. She makes her imagination and story become a living reality. The voice of the Father to the disciples after Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan was a reality of water-sacrament to the world. Meinrad's work is not just simply arts and story but they manifest in them the divine power and nature of God. She proves with art that we are co-creators with God in our culture and environment. We influence our environment with our creative art and are influenced by the environment by the response we get from it.

Certainly, Craighead is a very creative artist with very powerful sense of imagination. She imagines the activity of the creator and response of the creatures. God's creation of humans and His adoption of humans as His adopted sons and daughters. With a bit of difficulty Meinrad Craighead presents to us an image of androgyny which is difficulty looking at just as it is difficulty understanding a mystery. Yet, she presents to us in this art, the *coniunctio oppositorum*," the integration of duality. So, if we are to avoid sexist language, we can look at her art as a symbol of the divine unity. She says, "the symbolic dual being in whom the opposing energies are united is a sign of divine creative life. Each of us experience this polarity in striving for our own completeness and equilibrium. It is the sign of the mother-father creative spirit within, and in each soul these energies are uniquely reconciled." It is in water-sacrament too we find the unity of Godhead in which humans are united with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

Craighead visual art will help shape my way of looking at art and theology/spirituality as I do ministry in the future. According to the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Ca. 215), the solemn initiation followed a three -year catechumenate. Can this be applicable to all situation in all seasons? Will not a pastoral situation help in getting a particular solution to a particular problem?

The Water-Spirit sacrament (baptism) can easily be used not for the liberation of humans but instead for their being taken over by established societal structures (Sullivan, J. (2020). Fourez called them "perversion" of baptism. The "perversion" most strongly felt today is undoubtedly the tendency to consider water sacrament (baptism) as a taking over of the new member of the church. Canon law did state that the church has the right over the newly baptized and that from the moment it formed part of the Christian community it was subject to its law. Brunk (2020). said that though this statement

can be interpreted positively, it has to be recognized that in a clerical and often guilt-producing church, membership in the Christian community is not always “good news.” When certain celebrations of baptism express the taking over of the new member by the “sect of Christians,” one is in the presence of a “perverted” sacrament. For some parents, baptism and what it seems to imply is problem. In the church that sometimes oppresses consciences, Christians hesitate to have their children baptized for fear of allowing their liberty to be violated. The sacrament of baptism (Brunk, T. (2020) is distorted when the new member is made to pass a sort of individual examination and is asked whether he/she has faith and renounces Satan. To attach a normality or guilt to access to the kingdom is to distort its nature; the kingdom is the gracious gift of God, his grace, the very gift making it possible in him to build a community of love. What problem is there, indeed, in celebrating the fact that one wants to share with one’s children the hope on which one lives, provided, however, that this entry into the Christian community does not mean that the baptized member has to move with a ball and chain attached? The water-sacrament (baptism) of children must always, therefore, affirm that in the end they themselves will have to decide their lives. If the practices of the Christian community were one day to become an obstacle for them it would be quite reasonable and fitting for them to avoid these practices. We are encouraged to make the celebration of this Water-Spirit sacrament more lovely than is sometimes celebrated. Rules are good but when they are over emphasized the life and freshness the Water and the Spirit are supposed to bring us will bring death instead. According to the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus (Ca 215), the solemn initiation followed a three-year catechumenate. Can this be applicable to all situation in all seasons? Will not a pastoral situation help in getting a particular solution to a particular problem?

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