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**JESUS' BAPTISM AS A FOUNDATION
FOR AN INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE HUMAN BEING**

**Exegetical Analysis, Theological Implications
and Pastoral Applications of Matthew 3:13-17**

Moderator

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A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies

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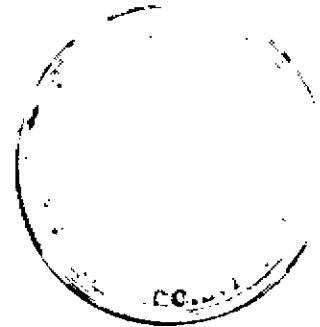
Jesus came to John, and received baptism at his hands. [...] "And behold the heavens were opened to him, and a voice was heard saying: This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased."

One who is loved generates love, and an immaterial light generates light inaccessible. This is the son of Joseph, and he is my only-begotten according to the divine essence.

"This is my beloved Son." Hungry is he who nourished unnumbered thousands, toiling is he who refreshes the toilers; he has nowhere to lay his head but controls all things with his hand; he suffers and yet heals all sufferings; he is buffeted by blows and presents the world with freedom; he is pierced in his side and restores the side of Adam.

[...] I proclaim with the voice of the herald: Come, all ye tribes of the nations. to the immortality of baptism. [...] For he who descends with faith into this laver of regeneration, renounces the devil and commits himself to Christ; [...] he lays aside slavery, he puts on adoption; he returns from his baptism gleaming like the sun, pouring out rays of righteousness, and, what is the most important point, he is returning as a son of God and a joint heir with Christ.

To him be glory and power with his sacred, good and quickening Spirit, both now and always and to all ages of eternity. Amen.



¹ *A reading from the Discourse on the Holy Theophany, attributed to St. Hippolytus. Nn 2:6-8.10. The Second Reading of 8 of January or Tuesday after Epiphany Sunday, The Divine Office. I.*

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:



Name of the Student: David Escrich Pérez, MCSPA

Date: 6th January 2003

This long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed:



Name of Supervisor: TK REDMOND

Date: 6/2/03

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This essay is going to deal with the account of the baptism of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew 3:13-17. We will see that Matt 3:13-17 is something more than a simple historical account of an important moment in the life of Jesus. I completely agree with Justin Martyr that if Jesus did not need to be baptized for his sins, his baptism must have been oriented toward the establishment of our salvation.² There have been many ways of explaining why Jesus received John's baptism. After my research, one of the clearest conclusions is that Jesus probably did this aware not only of John's role as a forerunner, but also of his own as "Servant-Messiah": Jesus' baptism may have been his first conscious step toward the baptism of the Cross.³ Jesus' baptism is the anticipation of his death on the cross and his resurrection. And as such, it gives an indispensable frame that unites and provides meaning and sense to all that lies between these events.⁴ Jesus' baptism resembles an instruction manual of how relations between God and man work, and how to become a "new man". A new dimension of possibilities and potential of the human person are being disclosed through Jesus' baptism. In Jesus the human being is restored as it was

² D. SMITH. "Irenaeus and the Baptism of Jesus", 619.

³ R.E.H. UPRICHARD. "The Baptism of Jesus", 187-202.

⁴ T.H. ROBINSON. *Twelve New Testament Studies*, 162.

originally, before the fall (Gen 3). Jesus is presented as the new Adam. He is not just a human being, but a human being in permanent communication and communion with God. The isolation from God of human beings is broken and through this new Adam God can now act and reveal his wisdom, holiness, love, power and salvation. Matt 3:13-17 shows us the way to be followed, the first step in this new way of life. I will try to demonstrate all this in the first and second chapters of this essay. In the third chapter I will make an attempt to expose how the theological implications of Matt 3:13-17 can demand a commitment from all Christians to work for an integral development of the human being. A commitment that becomes a nuclear element of what it is to be a Christian. Finally, I will try to see how this commitment can be applied pastorally.

In order to do all that I will use the composition critical method in the exegetical analysis of Matt 3:13-17, referring to both directly to the text and also to different published biblical studies on Matt 3:13-17. All the biblical texts quoted in this essay are taken from the Revised Standard Version.⁵ In this essay I also quote several books that are written in the Spanish language, the translations into English that I give are all mine. From now on I will not include the abbreviation of the Gospel of Matthew (Matt) when referring to any text from it, but simply the number of the chapter and verses (except in quotations from published works, where I will follow the quoted text as it is originally written).

⁵ The words that appear in Greek are all taken from NESTLE -- ALAND, ed., *Greek-English New Testament*.

Chapter I

Introductory Questions

1. Introduction

This first chapter contains a study of the delimitation of 3:13-17, its immediate and remote contexts, as well as its parallel texts in the other canonical Gospels. I also include other notions and assumptions that I adopt in this essay, like my approach to the Scriptures, the structure of the Gospel of Matthew and some background information relevant to the present study. Such as the meaning of the baptisms that John the Baptist was performing at the Jordan, or what Christopher Owzareck⁶ considers the “essence of Christianity”. I do not include a textual criticism of 3:13-17 because I consider it unnecessary for the purpose of this first chapter.⁷ My intention in this first chapter is to provide the necessary tools in order to enable us to deal with the exegetical analysis of the second chapter and the theological implications and pastoral applications of the third chapter.

⁶ C. OWZARECK, “BSE 315 The Letter to the Hebrews”.

⁷ Nevertheless I may use the textual criticism method in the exegetical analysis of the passage in the second chapter for some specific elements of the text.

2. My Approach to the Scriptures⁸

In the exegetical analysis of 3:13-17 I will use a compositional criticism method. This means that, in the exegetical analysis of the text, I will not limit myself to one or two biblical methods. I think that each critical method for the analysis of the scriptures has its own function and uncovers crucial truths contained in the Word of God. But at the same time, due to the richness of the Word of God, each method by itself will only offer us an incomplete view of it. Where a method is unable to resolve a certain problem, another one may solve it, and vice versa.⁹ But for a proper criterion in applying the most convenient methods, according to the various necessities of the different elements of the text, we must deal with the text as a composition:

An adequate model for the interpretation of the NT must deal with the documents as compositions. This means first that [...] the complete and finished literary form of the writing is what demands interpretation within the canon. Second, attention must be given to the literary conventions of the age of composition. [...] Third, the writings must be read in terms of their self-presentation rather than reduced to the status of sources for another body of information. Finally, the model must seek for a fit between the form of a writing and its function, between literary structure and substance.¹⁰

The gospel of Matthew is certainly the creation of a single author, even if he worked over different materials that he received. He arranged them, giving a unity to the text (according to his own convictions, interests, and concerns), and adapting the

⁸ By my approach to the scriptures I also mean the way I have approached the different published biblical studies that I have used in this essay. The criteria that I expose in this section are the same ones that I have used when having to choose between one or another scholar with the different biblical methods that each applies in their exegesis of the biblical texts.

⁹ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 5.

¹⁰ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 6.

material to the needs of a particular Christian community.¹¹ Therefore, I will analyse 3:13-17 as a finished composition. I will not use the text as a source to reconstruct history, giving the text a secondary role. I will give full priority to the text, attempting to interpret the message that the author tried to transmit, always taking into account the literary conventions of the age of composition, like the implications of the genre.

3. Background Information

In this section I want to deal with some of the essential background information that will concern us throughout this essay. They are notions and assumptions that I adopt, and will help us to deal with the chapters that will follow.

3.1 First-Century Judaism Setting

As mentioned above, it is very important for our understanding of the NT texts to be aware of the literary influences and conventions which Jesus and the writers of the NT texts were living under. We cannot isolate the NT texts from their historical setting, i.e. first-century Judaism.¹²

The apocalyptic style is one of the most important and crucial elements of that first-century Judaism that influenced the NT writings.¹³ The main purpose of apocalyptic is to announce a future reign of God, his triumph over evil, in order to

¹¹ A. WIKENHAUSER, *New Testament Introduction*, 256.265-266; E.D. FREED, *The New Testament*, 55; R.E. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 110.

¹² R.E. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 36; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 5.

¹³ E. VAN OOSTROM, "The Message of Biblical Apocalyptic I", 1.

teach us in which direction we should go, how to live in our present time, making it meaningful and even salvific.¹⁴ We can find this apocalyptic element in the Gospels:

The Christian end-time vision is the conviction that the first outbreak of the coming kingdom has already taken place among us. [...] Jesus, the “Son of Man”, has already given us a foretaste of life in the everlasting kingdom by His championship for the poor and the weak. [...] Though we have no real time-table of the future age, [...] we know “the direction” in which we will go now. Christ, the Lord, shows us clearly that direction to where He has gone already to prepare us a place. He is also the Lord of the future, just as He is in His very Person, the Kingdom of God personified.¹⁵

In the Gospel of Matthew, especially in 3:13-17, we can find other general features of apocalyptic literature. These apocalyptic features are common to the way in which the rabbinic schools treated the OT writings: e.g. the re-interpretation of history, presenting it in a schematic way;¹⁶ or the use of visions and symbols, forming a kind of cryptic language.¹⁷ In these rabbinic schools, old books were commented on. Those commentaries could take the form of *Midrash*,¹⁸ which consists in taking an old narration and enlarging or adapting it, step by step, to the new message that they wanted to transmit. Jesus’ baptism is presented in a different way by each one of the evangelists. From a historical point of view the different accounts seem to contradict each other.¹⁹ Therefore, we have to distinguish between what the text says and what it teaches: “This Gospel [Matthew’s] is composed entirely from a practical point of view. It is intended to convey instruction

¹⁴ E. VAN OOSTROM, “The Message of Biblical Apocalyptic I”, 78.

¹⁵ E. VAN OOSTROM, “The Message of Biblical Apocalyptic I”, 79-80.

¹⁶ A. WIKENHAUSER, *New Testament Introduction*, 270; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 189; E. VAN OOSTROM, “The Message of Biblical Apocalyptic I”, 4.

¹⁷ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 2.49; E. VAN OOSTROM, “The Message of Biblical Apocalyptic I”, 6.

¹⁸ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 52-58.

¹⁹ In Mark the revelation of God is only for Jesus, in Matthew is public. But in both, John the Baptist baptizes Jesus; while in Luke John the Baptist does not baptize Jesus, for he is in prison. Cf. section 5. Parallel Texts.

rather than merely to provide a chronicle.”²⁰ One of the devices that were used in these apocalyptic and rabbinic writings is the *inclusio*. This device consists of a word or a phrase occurring at the beginning and repeated at the end of a composition. The *inclusio* forces the attention of the audience back from the conclusion of the composition to its beginning and thus unites the parts of a story. Its function is to provide a framework which will link more or less self-contained passages to the web of the composition.²¹ In these writings they could also use existing symbols, like symbols utilised in Jewish worship²² (e.g. the baptism of John the Baptist) or symbols assimilated into their culture, using them in an isolated or united way at their convenience.²³ Therefore the vision in 3:16-17, with symbolic elements as the heavens opened or the dove cannot be properly understood if we take them literally, without analysing them as cryptic language or without making reference to the literary conventions of first-century Judaism.

3.2 The Baptisms of John the Baptist

The baptisms that John the Baptist was performing and the baptism of Jesus (even though it was performed by the same John the Baptist) do not have the same meaning.²⁴ The evangelists, as we have seen above, used symbols existing in contemporary Jewish worship, reshaping and adapting them to the message they

²⁰ A. WIKENHAUSER, *New Testament Introduction*, 182 (*explanation is mine*). See also *Ibid.*, 185; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 187.

²¹ This explanation of the *inclusio* device of Semitic stylistics is taken from C.H. LOHR, “Oral Techniques in Matthew’s Gospel”, 254.

²² L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 58-62.

²³ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio, Figuras y Símbolos*, 12.

²⁴ I will give the reason why the two baptisms have a different meaning in the exegetical analysis of Jesus’ baptism in the second chapter, otherwise, my exegetical analysis of 3:13-17 would have to start here.

wanted to transmit. For this reason, and for a proper interpretation of the Baptism of Jesus (3:13-17), we must pay some attention to the baptisms performed by John the Baptist.

It is important to note that at Jesus' time rites of immersion were not uncommon and they frequently symbolized some kind of purification: from sin, from destruction, from the profane sphere before entering sacred area, etc. These cleansings could have taken place when someone was entering into a new community or upon a new phase of life, in other words, as rites of initiation or as rites of passage. Also, they could be connected with ideas of a new birth, of a new life, or of salvation as contrast to nothingness, chaos, death, or destruction. But as rites, their meaning is normally given by the ritual context or otherwise through instruction or tradition.²⁵

The meaning of the baptism of John the Baptist was determined by his preaching. John the Baptist summoned his audience to repentance in view of God's coming judgement.²⁶ In the Bible, water is one of the important symbols, it has positive meaning as an indispensable factor of life, but it also has a second aspect, a negative one, as a destructive agent: God can use water to destroy his enemies (Gen 6-8; Exod 14; Isa 8:5-8); in the Jewish world, the depths of the waters, particularly the sea, were a symbol of the reign of death.²⁷ The symbol of destructive water was the one present in the baptism of John the Baptist, thus the disappearance

²⁵ The ideas of the whole paragraph are taken from: L. HARTMAN, "Baptism", 583.

²⁶ L. HARTMAN, "Baptism", 583-584.

²⁷ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio, Figuras y Simbolos*, 65.

of man under the water symbolizes death, in this case, death to his past, as if he was buried under the water.²⁸

3.3 “*The Essence of Christianity*”²⁹

This notion³⁰ is an exegetical and theological development of Heb 2:14-15.³¹ When the book of Genesis narrates the origin of human beings, it also indicates the nature and anthropology of human beings. If God created man and woman in his own image, and God is love, then, human beings were created to receive the love of God and reflect it. Man and woman were united and lived in the love of God. But then Adam and Eve received two kinds of “catechesis”; one from God, telling them not to eat from the “tree of Knowledge” because they would die (God said so out of love, for their own good); and another “catechesis” from the serpent; that God told them not to eat from that tree out of jealousy, because God did not want them to be like him (God did not love them). Adam and Eve doubted the love of God and they ate from the forbidden tree and in a certain way they died, they died spiritually. When God asked Adam why he ate of the forbidden tree, Adam did not believe in the love of God, otherwise he could have repented and asked for forgiveness, but in

²⁸ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio. Figuras y Símbolos*, 65.

²⁹ I consider this a context to 3:13-17. but I do not give any reason about this in this first chapter. I will prove it in the second chapter, because it will keep on coming up becoming the back bone of the text, giving it a full and complete sense. which I will developed in the third chapter of this essay.

³⁰ The whole notion which is an exegetical and theological development of Heb 2:14-15 is taken from C. OWZARECK, “BSE 315 The Letter to the Hebrews”.

³¹ “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.” (Heb 2:14-15).

his state of mind he was unable to think of anything good coming from God.³² In this way, Adam not only isolates himself from God, but his fear causes him to separate himself also from Eve. Adam is unable to risk his life for anyone and he shifts the guilt to Eve,³³ trying to emerge from the situation untarnished. In this way, Adam created a wall of fear around himself.

Adam's isolation is an imprisonment, the fear of death to which Heb 2:14-15 is referring to. It is the consequence of original sin to which all humanity is bound, the rejection of God's love. We were created as beings to be loved and we cannot survive without being loved. Love is life, and without life, we die. If we do not receive life/love from God we cannot give it to others, and we have to beg for it. The love of God is eternal, but the love of humans is temporal. We put conditions on others because we are afraid of losing the love they give us. We have to protect our life and therefore we become egoistic, jealous, and even violent when defending our dignity and pride.³⁴ We put limits on ourselves when "enough is enough".³⁵ We are surrounded by a wall set by the devil that we do not dare to pass because we think that after that limit there is only death. For example, if a thief steals our television,

³² Also reflected when they hide from God (lack of confidence) and God immediately recognises that it is because of disobeying him (Gen 3:8).

³³ "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me [...]" (Gen 3:12). When before he was united to Eve: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). Notice also that before man and woman were naked and were not ashamed (Gen 2:25), but after doubting God's love they could not be naked in front of each other (Gen 3:7). Thus, their union is broken, no confidence anymore, they isolate from each other.

³⁴ We beg for the respect of others, which is another way of begging for love. We need to be successful, and then work becomes suffering, alienation. We look for security rather than what we would really like (the realization of our dreams). We need to defend the little love we get, and we put conditions to those who love us because we are afraid to lose it. We limit our lives to slavery, which is another way of dying.

³⁵ There are things which we will never do, because we will be to harm ourselves. In this way we would shift the guilt to another one with the consequence of harming other people (like Adam did); or we would not be able to pardon our wife or husband for having had an affair with another person in a concrete moment of their life (instead of adopting a constructive attitude and trying to restore the unity, all because we consider more important the love we need to defend than the love we can give to the other person).

the normal reaction will be to try to stop him or to call the police, but we will never go after him to give him the aerial antenna.

This fear of death has been broken by a new Adam, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the original project of God, his own image, and he came to restore humankind to its original state. He came to destroy the bondage of original sin. And he proved that after that wall, that death, there is life. He kept on trespassing beyond that wall and trying to liberate other people from it. The paradigm of this spiritual death is the real death of Jesus, his crucifixion. Even when he was being crucified he was able to give love to those that were killing him.³⁶ Jesus died giving out love, with a kind of death that signified a curse from God (Deut 21:23), a total rejection from God, but he did not doubt God's love for him, and God gave him life after death. Jesus is telling us not to be afraid of death, after that wall we will find life. In other words, Jesus is telling us to go after the thief to give him the aerial antenna.

In nature death is productive. It is something normal, so why should we be afraid of death? The only reason we are afraid is because of the devil that makes us doubt God's love for us. But in Jesus we see that God still loves us sinners. We do not need to beg for love, just to accept and receive the love of God, to break the prison, because there is no such death (spiritual or physical), but life.

4. Delimitation of the Text

3:13-17 starts after the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-12). In verse 13 Jesus comes to be baptized by John the Baptist. There is a dialogue between Jesus

³⁶ "And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do [...].'" (Luke 23:34) And without doubting of God's love: he keeps on calling him father.

and John, and Jesus is baptized. The text ends in verse 17 with the voice from heaven as a response to Jesus' baptism. After verse 17 a new chapter begins, the temptations of Jesus in the desert (4:1-11). The text forms a unity in itself which is known as the Baptism of Jesus. Its unity is clear, and I have not found any doubts or controversies about its delimitation in all the studies about this passage that I have used for this essay.

5. Immediate Context

The meaning of 3:13-17 is conditioned by the text that precedes it: "The primary purpose of 3:1-12 is to set the stage for Jesus' baptism."³⁷ In 3:1-12 Matthew presents John the Baptist with a powerful message of repentance and judgement, like the Old Testament prophets.³⁸ John the Baptist announces the Messiah as a judge that will come to give the Holy Spirit to the repentant ones and to destroy sinners. This Messiah brings the consuming fire of divine judgement: "[...] but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (3:12), those are the sinful and unrepentant that will be consumed with the unquenchable fire of judgement against which they can find no protection.³⁹

The meaning of 3:13-17 is also influenced by the text that follows it (4:1-11).⁴⁰ John the Baptist presents us with the kind of Messiah that is expected: a judge that destroys sinners. But Jesus does not fulfil that pattern. Jesus does not

³⁷ D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 343.

³⁸ R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 91.

³⁹ F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 66.

⁴⁰ R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 102. He demonstrates that there is an intimate link between Jesus' baptism and his temptations.

come as a destroyer of sinners. but in solidarity with sinners.⁴¹ This new Messiah fulfils the pattern of the “Suffering Servant” of the songs of Isaiah (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). This new kind of messianism was the exact opposite of what had to characterize the Anointed of the Lord expected by the Jews.⁴² The temptations ratify this new kind of Messiah that Jesus would be:

He would not use his messianic powers for his own ends. Jesus rejected all political concepts of messiahship and especially the path of the Zealots.⁴³ Instead he would accept the path of the suffering servant that God had ordained for him [it appears in 3:17]. He would trust God for his daily needs [...]. He would experience hunger, hostility, sorrow and frustration like others. As he faced the cross he would not use his messianic powers to rescue himself [solidarity with sinners]. [...] He would trust instead in the providential care of his Father. [...] Rejecting the easy road, the author and perfecter of our faith chose instead the small gate and narrow road God had set before him (Mat 7:13-14).⁴⁴

6. Parallel Texts

To compare 3:13-17 with its parallel texts will help us to see the different stresses that each one of the evangelists gives to his text.⁴⁵ In this way we will be able to grasp the main traces of the meaning of Jesus’ baptism that Matthew wanted to transmit.⁴⁶ Especially relevant is Mark’s account of Jesus’ baptism (Mark 1:9-11) because what Matthew did was to rework Mark’s account, with possible additional

⁴¹ B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, 637.

⁴² J.J. DE VAULT, “‘The End of Days’ — Messianic Expectation in Judaism”, 55.

⁴³ A political messiah that will liberate Israel from the Roman oppression was expected. Israel had been under the rule of foreign powers since the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Except for a short period of independence from 142 to 63 B.C. when the Roman legions entered Jerusalem. The Zealots, chauvinists fanatically opposed to Roman occupation led a revolt against the Roman power in 66 A.D. that ended in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem. J.A. FITZMYER – *al.*, “A History of Israel”, 1236-1252.

⁴⁴ R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 110.

⁴⁵ E.D. FREED, *The New Testament*, 76.

⁴⁶ As we have seen above in section 3.1 first-century Judaism setting of this chapter these gospels accounts are not historically accurate and thus we should not focus so much in what they say but in what they are trying to teach.

touches from Q.⁴⁷ “In those days Jesus came [...] and was baptized [...]” (Mark 1:9) it lacks the sense of fulfilment of divine purpose that Matthew denotes.⁴⁸ The dialogue between Jesus and John the Baptist (3:14-15) is not found in any other parallel text, and it also denotes Matthew’s stress on fulfilment mentioned above: “[...] it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.” (3:15)

Luke 3:21-22 is very different from Matthew’s account. Jesus appears just to be one more of those that have been baptized, and there is no mention of who baptizes him. John the Baptist is put in prison just before the account of Jesus’ baptism (Luke 3:20). In Luke the divine revelation comes when Jesus is praying (Luke 3:21). There are two things that orientate Luke’s account in a different direction from Matthew’s, indicating a strong ecclesiological interest: one is the praying attitude of Jesus; and the other the preoccupation of locating the baptism within salvation history.⁴⁹

John 1:29-34 is very different from the synoptic gospels in structure and content. But still, Jesus’ baptism is seen, as in Matthew, as ordered by God.⁵⁰ And also, as in Matthew, it establishes the identity of Jesus as Messiah.⁵¹ John’s text links Jesus’ baptism with the image of the “[...] Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). This connection between Jesus’ baptism, his mission, and

⁴⁷ J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 26; D. SENIOR, *What are They Saying About Matthew?*, 45; E.D. FREED, *The New Testament*, 129; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 194.

⁴⁸ W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 27.

⁴⁹ C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 52-53.

⁵⁰ L. HARTMAN, “Baptism”, 584.

⁵¹ P. PERKINS, “The Gospel According to John”, 952.

his death, makes Jesus' baptism the first step towards bringing humanity out of the situation of enslavement in which it is found (to remove sin from the world).⁵²

7. Remote Context

This section is divided into three parts intimately related to each other. The process of the formation of the Gospels leads us to a coherent structure in line with this process. At the same time this structure leads us to analyse the Baptism of Jesus as a part of a larger unity that consists in the four first chapters of Matthew's Gospel.

7.1 Formation of the Gospels

In the formation of the gospels, it is believed that the first thing written down was the account of the passion and resurrection of Jesus, having its "living source" in the preaching of salvation, the kerygma:⁵³

If the resurrection faith gave birth to the Christian movement, it also created the need for interpretation. This is because the resurrection faith is rooted in a paradox: a man who died is now alive and the source of power for all humans; a person who died a sinner's death is now the source of the forgiveness of sins for all others. [...] It was not enough for the first Christians to experience the transforming transcendent power of the Spirit and proclaim that Jesus was Lord. They also had to interpret their lives in the light of this overwhelming experience. Out of the struggle of the first believers to find meaning in the paradox of the meditation of the holy through the death of a man, there emerged the interpretation of their existence. The symbolic world of Torah, which they shared with their fellow Jews, was the world of symbols toward which they inevitably turned. The paradox of the dead and raised Messiah was the interpretive key for their new reading. [...] If the community was to advance his own story, it was necessary first to come to grips with Jesus' story.⁵⁴

⁵² J. MATEOS - J. BARRETO, *El Evangelio de Juan*, 116-117.

⁵³ A. WIKENHAUSER, *New Testament Introduction*, 262; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 145.

⁵⁴ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 119, 125.

Therefore, the Gospels are the process of interpretation of the life of Jesus under the experience of the crucified and raised Messiah. Then the paradox of the dead and raised Messiah becomes the frame and the key to understand the unity and coherence of the Gospels.

7.2 Structure of the Gospel of Matthew

For this essay I am adopting the structure of the Gospel of Matthew proposed by Lohr.⁵⁵ The importance of this structure is that it places the paradox of the dead and raised Messiah as the frame to the whole Gospel, in accordance with the formation process mentioned above:

A	1-4	Narrative:	Birth and beginnings
I	5-7	SERMON:	BLESSINGS, ENTERING KINGDOM
B	8-9	Narrative:	Authority and invitation
II	10	SERMON:	MISSION DISCOURSE
C	11-12	Narrative:	Rejection by this generation
X	13	SERMON:	PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM
C	14-17	Narrative:	Acknowledgment by disciples
II	18	SERMON:	COMMUNITY DISCOURSE
B	19-22	Narrative:	Authority and invitation
I	23-25	SERMON:	WOES, COMING KINGDOM
A	26-28	Narrative:	Death and rebirth

In this structure the different materials that Matthew used are arranged according to a concentric symmetry. The most prominent section is in the centre and the rest are grouped on either side of the central pivot, and they match. In this way, we see that there is a parallelism between the “birth and beginnings of Jesus” (A 1-4) and his “death and rebirth” (A 26-28). These two units work as an *inclusio* providing unity and a frame to understand the whole Gospel.⁵⁶ Therefore, the death

⁵⁵ C.H. LOHR, “Oral Techniques in Matthew’s Gospel”, 258.

⁵⁶ “His [Matthew’s] characteristic title for Jesus is Immanuel — a named foretold by Isaiah (7:14) and interpreted by Matthew at the outset of his Gospel as meaning “God with us” (1:23). At

and resurrection of Jesus becomes the interpretative key to understand the birth and beginnings of Jesus, and vice versa, the birth and beginnings of Jesus becomes the interpretative key to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus. This combination provides unity and coherence to the Gospel of Matthew.

7.3 “Birth and Beginnings” (A 1-4)

3:13-17 is part of a larger text which Lohr, in his structure of the Gospel of Matthew denominates as the “birth and beginnings” and consists of the four first chapters of the Gospel. The unity to these four chapters is given by the strong parallelism that Matthew draws between Jesus and Moses. The events in the life of Jesus find a parallelism in the events of the life of Moses. The infancy narrative (1-2:23) matches the infancy of Moses (Exod 1:1-2:10; 4:20),⁵⁷ the Baptism of Jesus (3:13-17) matches the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel (Exod 4:10-31),⁵⁸ and the

the end of his Gospel, Matthew records the promise of the glorified Christ: “I will be with you always...” (28:29). This instance of ring composition [*inclusio*] gives the spirit of the whole work. It also binds independent units to the narrative.” C.H. LOHR, “Oral Techniques in Matthew’s Gospel”, 254. (*explanation is mine*).

⁵⁷ “[...] Matthew’s infancy gospel manifests an unusual similarity between the infancy of Jesus and that of Moses, as the latter is narrated in Exodus and midrash literature. Thus, the births of the two “saviours of Israel” are previously announced through a dream or prophesy. At the announcement of Jesus’ birth Herod and his court tremble, just as Pharaoh and his people trembled at the announcement of Moses’ birth. And just as Herod consults the scribes, Pharaoh consults his astrologers. Both tyrants decree a murder of children, from which the heroes are miraculously saved. In both cases the future saviour, persecuted and away from his people, receives a heavenly admonition to return because ‘those who were plotting against his life are dead’ (Matthew 2:20 and Exod. 4:20).” S. MUÑOZ, “Literary Genre of the Infancy Gospel in St. Matthew”, 251; See also J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 58; P.F. ELLIS, *Matthew*, 30; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 328; D.C. ALLISON, *The New Moses*, 268; M. BIELER, “The Mysteries of Jesus’ Public Life”, 55.

⁵⁸ J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 58-59; R.A.F. MACKENZIE, “Bread for the Faithful”, 15; D.C. ALLISON, *The New Moses*, 268; M. BIELER, “The Mysteries of Jesus’ Public Life”, 55.

Temptations (4:1-11) match the wilderness temptations of Israel (Exod 16:1-17:7).⁵⁹ Analysing this parallelism, if Moses saved Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh by crossing the Red Sea, then the Baptism of Jesus becomes a salvific action of Jesus to liberate human kind. Thus this salvific action automatically becomes parallel to Jesus' death on the cross, which is the "source of eternal salvation".⁶⁰ Therefore, it is precisely the link between Jesus' baptism and Jesus' death and resurrection that gives unity and coherence to the whole Gospel.

8. Conclusion

As shown above, the Gospel of John connects the passion and resurrection of Jesus with his baptism. We can find that same connection in Mark 10:38-40 and in Luke 12:50.⁶¹ This connection is also present in other writings earlier than John's or Matthew's account such as the letters of Saint Paul:⁶²

"[...] according to Paul, baptism into Christ's death meant life with the raised Christ in an ethical duty to 'newness of life' in the present time [...] Paul explains, reconfirms and develops his argument: 'we (who died in baptism)' is specified as 'our old person,' who was 'crucified with (Christ),' i.e., the former ('adamitic') conditions under the reign of God".⁶³

In the third and fourth centuries we find again this connection in the writings of Origene, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia.⁶⁴ Therefore, the connection between the passion of

⁵⁹ P.F. ELLIS, *Matthew*, 30; D.C. ALLISON, *The New Moses*, 268; M. BIELER, "The Mysteries of Jesus' Public Life", 55.

⁶⁰ Catechism of the Catholic Church. 617.

⁶¹ R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 97-98.

⁶² "Paul's letters are the earliest writings in the New Testament and date from between A.D. 50 and 65." E.D. FREED, *The New Testament*, 53.

⁶³ L. HARTMAN, "Baptism", 588. (*Hartman's explanations*)

⁶⁴ T.M. FINN, "Baptismal Death and Resurrection".

Jesus and his baptism is found before, after, and in the gospels.⁶⁵ That means that this connection could have been part of the core doctrine of the early Christian church, and thus, very well known by Matthew.

The connection between the passion of Jesus and his baptism in the Gospel of Matthew enriches and opens new horizons to the significance of these two events. It allows us to see Jesus' baptism as the foundation of our redemption, and therefore, to see the death and resurrection of Jesus as a certain moment of baptism. In relation to this is precisely where the importance of the "essence of Christianity" lies for this essay. First of all, it presents a pattern of death and resurrection that is present in the entire Gospel. Second, this pattern enlightens the redemptive value of the different teachings of Jesus, as well as incarnation and baptism. Finally, it enlightens the meaning of other NT texts like those of Saint Paul when he talks about Jesus as the new Adam, or when he talks about dying and rising with Jesus when we are baptised.

In the introduction I stated that the purpose of this chapter was to provide us with the necessary tools in order to be able to deal with the chapters that will follow. As we have seen, the meaning of Jesus' baptism has been affected by Jesus' death and resurrection. Therefore, if we want to disclose all the meaning of Jesus' baptism, the paradox of the dead and raised Messiah as its interpretative key becomes an indispensable tool.

⁶⁵ Paul's theology of baptism as death and resurrection together with Christ is not found in the more orthodox writers of the 2nd century probably because it was a reaction to the Gnostics sects who were fond of citing Paul as the authority for their speculations. T.M. FINN, "Baptismal Death and Resurrection", 175.

Chapter II

Exegetical Analysis of 3:13-17

1. Introduction

“Mark’s baptism account quickly became an embarrassment to the early Church, because it was thought unsuitable that the sinless Jesus should be baptized for his sins.”⁶⁶ Most scholars⁶⁷ agree that Matthew’s reason for adding 3:14-15 to Mark’s account was apologetic, because 3:14-15 points out the explicit will of Jesus for being baptised. But the apologetic necessity of defending the sinless state of Jesus cannot be taken as the interpretation of the text itself, but just as one of the possible reasons why Matthew developed an account of Jesus’ baptism.⁶⁸ “It is not necessary to see in the dialogue of verses 14-15 an attempt by an embarrassed evangelist, still less an embarrassed Church, to provide explanations for an awkward

⁶⁶ B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, 637.

⁶⁷ F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 68; J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 59; C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 51; B. RIGAU, *Testimony of St. Matthew*, 38; W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31; A. KIRK – R.E. OBACH, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 43; R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 51; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 324; U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 175; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63; W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 27; B.T. VIVIANO, “The Gospel According to Matthew”, 637;

⁶⁸ A. WIKENHAUSER, *New Testament Introduction*, 258; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 16.

occurrence.”⁶⁹ The question now is: How to develop a proper interpretation of 3:13-17? In the first chapter we already identified an interpretative key for 3:13-17 and the criteria to apply it. In this chapter we will see how the account of the passion of Jesus (27:32-54) helps us to interpret 3:13-17. In this way, the redemptive value of Jesus’ baptism will be unveiled and connected with the episode of the fall in the book of Genesis.

2. Literary Form of 3:13-17

We cannot assume that the authors of the gospels wrote them in complete isolation from their culture and the categories of their time. They did not invent a new literary style.⁷⁰ We have already mentioned in chapter one that the climate and circumstances of the gospels have apocalyptic, rabbinic *Midrash*, and liturgical aspects; aspects which were not isolated from each other, but united in the NT writings.⁷¹ Therefore, in order to understand 3:13-17 we should take into account the universe of concepts and symbols of first-century Judaism in which the author dwelled.⁷²

⁶⁹ W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31. Many scholars do not mention at all this apologetic necessity in their exegetical analysis of 3:13-17, like: C.C. MARTINDALE, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*; G. BORNKAMM – G. BARTH – H.J. HELD, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 129; D. SENIOR, *Invitation to Matthew*, 44-46; J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 31-53; J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 622-641; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 38; E. BORING, “The Gospel of Matthew”, 159; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 101; S. HAHN – C. MITCH, *The Gospel of Matthew*. Other scholars that mention the apologetic necessity do not use it to find and explain the purpose and meaning of 3:13-17, like: C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 51; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63.

⁷⁰ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio, Figuras y Símbolos*, 12.

⁷¹ L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 62.65.

⁷² J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio, Figuras y Símbolos*, 11; L.T. JOHNSON, *The Writings of the New Testament*, 16.

3. Structure of 3:13-17

If we apply the account of the death and resurrection of Jesus (27:32-54) as the interpretative key when analysing the structure of the account of Jesus' baptism (3:13-17), we can find a parallelism (not an analogy) between the two accounts:

	Jesus' death & resurrection account (27:32-54)	Jesus' baptism account (3:13-17)
A. The action takes place outside the holy city, Jerusalem.	To be crucified Jesus is taken out of the city (27:32-33).	Jesus travels to the wilderness of Judea to be baptized (3:1; 3:13)
B. Jesus is presented as a type of messiah that he will not be.	In 27:37 Jesus is presented as king of the Jews.	In 3:1-12 he is presented as a judge that comes to destroy sinners.
C. Jesus is in solidarity with sinners.	Jesus is crucified with sinners (27:38.44).	Jesus is baptized with sinners (3:5-6.13).
D. Jesus is tempted.	When Jesus is hanging on the cross he is told several times that if he is the Son of God, he could save himself and avoid dying on the cross, but Jesus refuses and dies on the cross (27:39-44).	John the Baptist tells Jesus not to be baptized because he is superior, but Jesus refuses and is baptized (3:14-15).
E. First effect of his action.	After Jesus died, "and behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (27:51).	After coming out of the water: "and behold, the heavens were opened" (3:16).
F. Second effect of his action.	Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of the saints (27:52-53).	The Spirit came, descended on Jesus (3:16).
G. Proclamation: Jesus is son of God.	The roman centurion proclaimed Jesus the Son of God (27:54).	The voice from heaven proclaimed Jesus the Son of God (3:17).

It is difficult, not to say impossible, to think that the writer did not have in mind any kind of relation between these two texts (3:13-17 and 27:32-54) when he wrote them. Therefore, we should conclude, once more, that we would not be able to

grasp all the meaning of 3:13-17 if we do not analyse it in the light of the passion and resurrection of Jesus.

4. A: The Action Takes Place Outside the Holy City, Jerusalem

“In those days Jesus came [...] and was baptized [...]” (Mark 1:9), Matthew changes it to “[...] to be baptised” (3:13). Matthew writes τοῦ with the infinitive in place of the passive tense of Mark, thus expressing Jesus’ will and purpose to be baptised.⁷³ In 3:13 we have Jesus coming to the Jordan, the wilderness where John is baptising people (3:1.5). Here, the wildernesses stands as a concept opposed to the Jewish institution, represented by Jerusalem and the temple. As a contrast to the injustice prevailing in Jewish society in the time of John the Baptist, the wilderness is presented as a remainder of the former ideal and as a renewed offering of God’s grace.⁷⁴ In 27:32-33 Jesus is taken outside the holy city, Jerusalem, to be crucified, unjustly condemned by the Jewish religious authorities. The parallelism of 27:32-33 with 3:13 reinforces the idea that the baptism of John was a rite that symbolized death. Therefore, Jesus is not only willing to be baptised, but he is also conscious of what it is to be baptised, a symbolic death in obedience to God. Jesus’ baptism is an anticipation of his death on the cross.⁷⁵

⁷³ G. CAMPBELL, *Studies in the Four Gospels*. 25; W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 30; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 321; U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 177; W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 27.

⁷⁴ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio. Figuras y Símbolos*. 50-51.

⁷⁵ G. CAMPBELL, *Studies in the Four Gospels*, 26; T.H. ROBINSON, *Twelve New Testament Studies*, 162; G. BORNKAMM – G. BARTH – H.J. HELD, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 140; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 38.

5. B: Jesus is Presented as a Type of Messiah that He Will Not Be

Matthew starts 3:13 with the word “then” (τότε), which he uses already in 3:5, thus connecting the two stories⁷⁶ to bring into the mind of the reader the context in which 3:13-17 is taking place.⁷⁷ Therefore, Jesus is presented as the mighty one, the judge Messiah that comes to destroy sinners, described in 3:1-12. Neither the title “King of the Jews”⁷⁸ given to Jesus in 27:37, nor the title “judge Messiah” given to Jesus by John the Baptist, corresponds to the type of Messiah that Jesus will be.

6. C: Jesus is in Solidarity with Sinners

The connection between 3:1-12 and 3:13 remind us also that the people that were being baptised by John the Baptist were sinners: “Then went out to him [...] and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins” (3:5-6). Then, when we read that Jesus went to John to be baptised (3:13) we have to have in mind that he would be baptised with sinners. Baptism was a rite for sinners, as the crucifixion was a death for sinners and a curse from God (Deut 21:23). As Jesus was crucified with sinners (27:38.44), so was he also baptised with sinners. Therefore, Jesus did not come as a judge to punish sinners as John the Baptist presented him (3:1-12), but in solidarity with sinners.

⁷⁶ 3:13-17 and 3:1-12. By the same word, “then” (τότε) Matthew also connects a third story: the temptations in the desert account (4:1-11) as we will see below.

⁷⁷ G. CAMPBELL, *Studies in the Four Gospels*, 24; J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 35; J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 26; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 320; U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 173; W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 27.

⁷⁸ “As the ‘King of the Jews (Israel),’ the ‘public’ view of his person is that he is a political throne-pretender. In reality however, he is the King in the sense that he suffers on their behalf.” J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 34. See also chapter one, section 5. *Immediate Context*.

7. D: Jesus is Tempted

Why should the Messiah be put to death on a cross like a criminal if he was innocent? How could this kind of death for Jesus be the will of God? Eventually it was understood as the will of God. This is the paradox of the dead and risen Messiah that the first Christians needed, after experiencing it, to interpret. The same questions we could ask about Jesus' baptism: Why should the Messiah be baptised, a rite for sinners, if he was sinless? How could this rite, done to Jesus, be the will of God? Eventually, it was understood as the will of God. It is the same paradox as that of the dead and risen Messiah. John the Baptist does not want to baptise Jesus, not because he is very humble,⁷⁹ but because he fails to understand this paradox.⁸⁰

7.1 To Fulfil All Righteousness

What is the reason for Jesus to be baptised? Matthew reports Jesus as saying that it had to be done “[...] to fulfil all righteousness” (3:15), but, what does that mean?

⁷⁹ As some scholars maintained, like: C.C. MARTINDALE, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*; F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 68; R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 51; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 101.

⁸⁰ “Jesus’ gentle rebuke, a rebuke nevertheless, specifies what is wrong in John’s understanding of who Jesus is. [...] First of all, the timing is wrong in John’s perception. John conceives Jesus as the mighty eschatological judge [...] who will destroy evil people in fire (3:12). [...] in the present (3:15), Jesus should not be perceived in this way. [...] John’s perception of the present situation is also wrong, because he does not have the proper view of what is ‘fitting’ for it. By contrast, Jesus knows what is ‘fitting... to fulfil all righteousness’ (3:15).” D. PATTE, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 50. See also: G. CAMPBELL, *Studies in the Four Gospels*, 25; J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 26; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 38.

Righteousness (δικαιοσύνη) can be translated from Greek as righteousness or as justice.⁸¹ But this term cannot be understood in a moralistic sense,⁸² neither in a legalistic sense.⁸³ Here, in 3:15, righteousness/justice is not an ideal by which actions can be measured (as in Greek thought), but it refers to actions that are faithful to commitments or relationships (Hebrew tradition):

God is righteous or just in that God acts faithfully to the covenant commitments to save and deliver his people. [...] God's people or Israel's kings are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust in that they are or are not faithful to the covenant demands.⁸⁴

Here (3:15) to fulfil (πληρῶσαι) means to actualise.⁸⁵ Matthew reserves the use of this word for Jesus alone.⁸⁶ Most probably the word refers, not only to the fulfilment of God's will, but especially to the fulfilment of scriptures, usually prophecies.⁸⁷

To fulfil all righteousness, then, means not only to fulfil the demands of God upon his people, but also to fulfil those scriptures in which those demands are set out.⁸⁸ Most probably, the scriptures to which Matthew is referring are the four poems about the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12):

The servant is the one who carries the sins of the people. The first act of Jesus is to submit himself to the confession of sins. The "messianism" of Jesus is not an external attribute. The Servant is not separated from humankind. He takes upon him all their sins. Entering into the dynamism of our history, he enters in solidarity with

⁸¹ B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", 637.

⁸² "[...] 'righteousness' in Mt can mean moral conduct [...], that sense is usually applied to the disciples, not to Jesus." J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 27.

⁸³ G. BORNKAMM – G. BARTH – H.J. HELD, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 141.

⁸⁴ W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 102. See also: D. SENIOR, *Invitation to Matthew*, 45; S. HAHN – C. MITCH, *The Gospel of Matthew*.

⁸⁵ TDNT VI, 294; U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 179.

⁸⁶ U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 179.

⁸⁷ J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 27; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 326; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 102.

⁸⁸ J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 59; W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31-32.

our humanity. This true insertion will be his death. For it is already suggested in the confession of the sins, because the death and the sin have an intrinsic binding.⁸⁹

As we have seen, God's righteousness and human righteousness are not independent of each other; they are two aspects of the same covenant. Jesus, with his act of baptism, fulfils both aspects of the covenant. On one hand, he fulfils God's commitment toward his people by providing a way for our salvation. Jesus, by submitting himself to the act of baptism, shows us that just repentance of sins is not enough anymore for our salvation. A new step is needed: to deny oneself in order to obey God.⁹⁰ On the other hand, by being the prototype and example for all Christians,⁹¹ he becomes the first human to fulfil God's demands on his people of denying themselves in order to obey God.

7.2 *Jesus is Tempted*

The particle "then" (τότε) also connects 3:13-17 with the account of the temptations of Jesus in the desert (4:1-11)⁹², bringing it into the context. We could define temptation as a seduction into disobedience to God.⁹³ In 4:1-11 we can distinguish three attempts to reduce Jesus to disobedience: "In each answer, then, Jesus confirms his allegiance to God. He remains in union with God, and does not

⁸⁹ Comment about the relation of the figure of the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah in chapters 42-53 with Jesus' baptism account (3:13-15): C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 54-55. See also: G. CAMPBELL, *Studies in the Four Gospels*, 25-26.

⁹⁰ J. MATEOS - F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 38.

⁹¹ U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 178.

⁹² By the word, "then" (τότε) Matthew also connects 3:13-17 (it also connected 3:13-17 with 3:1-12) a third story: the temptations in the desert account (4:1-11). In this way Matthew constructs a three part structure that is one of the typical constructions that Matthew uses. For this see: J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 36; U. LUZ, *Matthew 1-7*, 52; E.D. FREED, *The New Testament*, 126.

⁹³ "[...] the temptation placed the Lord in a situation of open choice between surrender to God's will and revolt against it." *TDNT* VI, 33.

abuse his divine Sonship, the authority of the Messiah.”⁹⁴ In 27:39-44, which would be a parallel to 4:1-11, Jesus is also tempted with the same kind of temptation.⁹⁵

Matthew talks about the “tempter” (ὁ πειράζων) (4:3) and following the definition of temptation given above, anybody trying to seduce Jesus to disobey God could be a tempter, just as the mockers at the foot of the cross were also tempters (27:39-44). In fact, in Matthew’s Gospel (16:21-23), Peter becomes the tempter when he attempts to turn Jesus from obeying God.⁹⁶ What is the difference between Peter and John the Baptist? Both tried to turn Jesus away from obeying God when he decides to be crucified and to be baptised, respectively. And both were thinking, not in the way God does, but as human beings do. Thus we can conclude, given the above connections between 3:13-17, 4:1-11 and 27:39-44; and the example of Peter as a tempter in 16:21-23, that Matthew pictured John the Baptist in 3:14 as the tempter trying to tempt Jesus to disobey God.

8. E: First Effect of His Action

When Jesus expressed through baptism his commitment to God, the first reaction to this was the opening of the heavens (3:16). If we analyse this event in reference to Jesus’ passion we find that the first reaction to Jesus’ death on the cross

⁹⁴ *TDNT* VI, 35.

⁹⁵ “The text of this passage has a special affinity with Jesus’ temptations in the wilderness (4:1-11). There Satan twice tempts Jesus with the same phrase the passers-by employ, ‘if you are the Son of God’ (4:3.6). The mockery becomes a further temptation. Will Jesus use the power to save himself, or will he trust in the Father’s power to deliver him? Jesus’ mission is to save his people (1:21). [...] He refuses to save himself. He proves that he is Son of God precisely in his obedience to and trust in the Father.” F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 113-114.

⁹⁶ “one might perceive a temptation in the words of Peter after the first intimation of the passion, since Jesus here rebuffs him with the same words as He used to Satan in the temptation story at Mt. 4:10: Ὑπαγε ὀπίσω μου, Σατανᾶ.” *TDNT* VI, 36.

was the breaking of the curtain of the temple (27:51). So, let us analyse these two events and their relation.

In the temple there were two curtains, one separated the holy of holies from the holy place, and the other was at the entrance of the temple. Matthew does not specify which one is torn in two. If the one at the entrance was the one torn, that could have meant the destruction of the temple.⁹⁷ If it was the one separating the holy of holies from the holy place, the meaning could have been that as this curtain served to conceal God's glory, then by the death of Jesus, God's glory shines forth to all humanity.⁹⁸ Since Matthew does not specify which curtain he means, he is probably referring to both.⁹⁹ Then the meaning would be that Jesus' death brings an end to the old temple cult, and in doing so, it renders God's glory accessible to all humanity.¹⁰⁰ The breaking of the temple curtains in two marks the end of an old era, and the beginning of a new one.¹⁰¹

The splitting of the temple curtains and the opening of the heavens have several parallel features: both occur after an act of Jesus' death (symbolic and real); and both share a similar picture, the breaking in two, the expression "from top to bottom" (27:51) alludes to heaven and earth.¹⁰² And both the temple curtains and the heavens were concealing God's glory, the divine and sacred world.¹⁰³ Therefore, the

⁹⁷ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 47.

⁹⁸ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 47.

⁹⁹ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 47.

¹⁰⁰ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 47.

¹⁰¹ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 116; J. MATEOS - F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 277.

¹⁰² J. MATEOS - F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 277.

¹⁰³ The "heavens" is one of the symbols of the OT that has been reshaped by Matthew. It is not a material and solid entity anymore: in Matthew, the "heavens" become a symbol to express the aspects of the divine being: the inaccessibility and distance of heaven symbolize the transcendence

barriers that separated man from God are broken. Jesus' act has ended the isolation of man from God. Thus, the meaning of the opening of the heavens is the inauguration of a new era of communion/communication between God and Jesus.¹⁰⁴

Jesus emerging out of the water recalls the image of Israel being adopted as God's son at the crossing of the waters of the Red Sea (Exod 4). This implies that when Jesus comes out of the water a new Israel is born.¹⁰⁵ This image of Exodus brings also to the scene of Jesus' baptism the idea of the covenant mentioned in section 7.1. Jesus, the new Israel, fulfils the covenant demands of the two sides, God and his people.¹⁰⁶ Jesus' act of obedience has inaugurated a new era of relations between God and Jesus, and through him, all humankind.¹⁰⁷

9. F: Second Effect of His Action

Immediately after the split of the curtains of the temple comes an earthquake, the splitting of the rocks and the resurrection of the saints (27:52-53). In the Gospel of Matthew such shaking as the earthquake always accompanies a manifestation of God's power in Jesus (8:24; 21:10; 28:2).¹⁰⁸ Considering the other mentions of the

and excellence of God. For this, see J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *Evangelio, Figuras y Símbolos*, 56-58.

¹⁰⁴ C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 55; J. MATEOS - F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63; B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", 637. Note also, that the communication/communion is between God and Jesus because the rest of humans also share it but through Jesus. This is also supported by the fact that many ancient text have: "the heavens were opened to him." NESTLE – ALAND, ed., *Greek-English New Testament*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 328; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 104.

¹⁰⁶ As expressed above in section 7.1.

¹⁰⁷ The rest of humankind will enjoy this state of permanent communication/communion with God by following the example of Jesus, thus through him, as exposed in the next section.

¹⁰⁸ F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 116.

rock in this Gospel (7:24; 16:18), in which it means a foundation, the splitting¹⁰⁹ of the rocks indicates that from Jesus' death onwards exists no other solid foundation for building up humanity than Jesus himself, his words and deeds.¹¹⁰ All the former systems and securities (like the old cult of the temple) collapse. The splitting of the rocks is followed by the resurrection of the bodies of the saints. The Spirit exhaled by Jesus imbues the saints with the life that overcomes death.¹¹¹ The saints are not characters of the OT, they are in relation with the Holy Spirit (3:11), they are the ones that have received the Spirit because they have followed Jesus.¹¹² Their resurrection is verified only after the resurrection of Jesus (27:53). In this way Matthew makes the resurrection of the saints a consequence of the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹¹³ The "holy city" cannot be Jerusalem anymore but the Christian community.¹¹⁴ The resurrection of the saints indicates the arrival of the messianic times.¹¹⁵

After the opening of the heavens, the Spirit of God descends like a dove. It is the second effect of Jesus' symbolic death. Here the Spirit is not called holy, which is what Matthew normally uses to qualify the Spirit.¹¹⁶ If Jesus was sinless, he didn't need to be sanctified. Neither had he to be made Son of God for he was already

¹⁰⁹ Matthew uses the same verb as for the curtains of the temple. Cf. NESTLE – ALAND, ed., *Greek-English New Testament*, 84.

¹¹⁰ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 277-278.

¹¹¹ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 278.

¹¹² J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 278.

¹¹³ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 278; F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 117.

¹¹⁴ As we saw above, the redemptive action of God happens outside Jerusalem (3:13; 27:32-33). "The "holy city" cannot be Jerusalem anymore (4:5), this city has been called assassin (23:37-39). It is the city consecrated by the Spirit, the Christian community or church of Jesus, conceived as a city in 16:18. See J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 278.

¹¹⁵ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 277; F.J. MATERA, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies*, 116.

¹¹⁶ See 1:18.20; 3:11; 12:32; 28:19.

declared Son of God in 2:15.¹¹⁷ Therefore, the descent of the Spirit cannot mean a sanctifying action on Jesus.¹¹⁸

The descending of the Spirit like a dove recalls the account of Gen 1:2. This implies that the Spirit like a dove is the Spirit of Creation.¹¹⁹ This image of the dove also recalls the coming of the dove to Noah after the destructive waters of the flood receded. The arrival of that dove in Gen 8:11 as here in 3:16, marks a turning point in salvation-history.¹²⁰ This descent is in line with the public proclamation of Jesus as the Son of God in v.17, and it must be interpreted in the same line. In other words, the descent of the Spirit of Creation proclaims rather than creates. It proclaims that Jesus is the fulfilment of the creation of God.¹²¹

But what Matthew really intended with the allusion of Gen 1:2 is to recapitulate the first episodes of Genesis.¹²² Therefore Jesus, the new man in permanent communion/communication with God, is the fulfilment of God's project of man that failed with Adam. And he is the only foundation on which humanity can be built again. Through him, like the saints that were resurrected after Jesus' resurrection, his followers will become new and fulfilled human beings in

¹¹⁷ R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 53; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 335; R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 99.

¹¹⁸ R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 52.

¹¹⁹ The Spirit of God descending like a dove is a symbol of new creation reminiscent of dove-like movement of the Spirit over the chaotic waters of Gen 1:2: J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 59; A. KIRK – R.E. OBACH, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 44; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 334; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63; B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", 638; E. BORING, "The Gospel of Matthew", 160; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹²⁰ A. KIRK – R.E. OBACH, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 44; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹²¹ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 335.

¹²² D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 334.

permanent communion/communication with God. Like the splitting of the rocks and the resurrection of the saints (27:52-53), the descent of the Spirit also marks the start of the messianic era. Only after the Spirit comes does the Messiah's ministry begin.¹²³

10. G: Proclamation: Jesus Is Son of God

Many scholars agree that the voice from heaven¹²⁴ recalls Ps 2:7, Isa 42:1 and Gen 22:2.¹²⁵ It is a public proclamation, not directed to Jesus, but to others.¹²⁶ It is a message directed to the readers, Jesus' followers.

10.1 The King Messiah

"This is my beloved Son" (3:17), is an allusion to Ps 2:7: "You are my Son".¹²⁷ This royal psalm celebrates the coronation of the Davidic king. After the

¹²³ D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 335. It is the anointing of Jesus as Messiah, the prophesies about Jesus to proclaim and to set free the oppressed of Isa 42:1; 61:1 have begun to be realised: W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹²⁴ "[...] 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" (3:17).

¹²⁵ J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 60; C. DUQUOC, *Christologia*, 50; D. SENIOR, *Invitation to Matthew*, 45; J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 28; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39; R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 53; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 336-341; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63; B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", 638; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹²⁶ In Mark the voice is directly addressed to Jesus: "Thou art [...]" (Mark 1:11), in Matthew the proclamation is public: "This is [...]" (3:17). F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 68; J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 60; B. RIGAUX, *Testimony of St. Matthew*, 38; W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31; J.P. MEIER, *Matthew*, 28; D. PATTE, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 51; W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 29; E. BORING, "The Gospel of Matthew", 160.

¹²⁷ It is a bit difficult to appreciate this allusion, in Greek is clearer: "Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός" literary means: "this is my Son, my beloved" (translation is mine). In Mark 1:11 (Σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου) the allusion to Ps 2:7 (υἱός μου εἶ σύ) is more clear, Mark changes the order of the words to express that is Jesus who is the Son of God. The fact that Matthew used Mark as a source, make us think that Matthew also intended this allusion to Ps 2:7. For this see: J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 336-

monarchy ended, up to Matthew's time, Jews could use this psalm to express their messianic expectations.¹²⁸ The psalm is in the line of John the Baptist's preaching in 3:1-12: the King Messiah rules with an iron rod (Ps 2:9) and invites people to serve the Lord in fear, for his anger can make one perish (Ps 2:11). By this allusion to Ps 2 Matthew nominates and qualifies Jesus as the Messiah, God's son to represent God's just rule on earth.¹²⁹

10.2 The "Suffering Servant"

"My beloved"¹³⁰ makes allusion to Gen 22:2. It refers to Isaac, the unique son who was about to be sacrificed by his father Abraham at God's command. God's promise to Abraham of blessing all the nations would be put in jeopardy by Isaac's death. Even though God asked for the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham remained faithful and in turn God proved faithful in providing deliverance.¹³¹ With this Matthew implies that God acknowledges the self denial in obedience to him that is implied in

337. See also the notes concerning this passage (3:17) in the RSV Bible and in NESTLE – ALAND, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

¹²⁸ "Ps 2. This is a Royal psalm that originally belonged to the coronation ceremony of the Davidic kings in Jerusalem. Even after the monarchy was no more, the Israelites could use the psalm to express their hope that one day another Davidic king would come to establish an era of perfect peace and prosperity. The prophets frequently expressed such hopes. Since this never happened in the OT period, the earliest Christian tradition saw in Jesus the fulfilment of these hopes (Acts 4:25-28; 13:32-33)" Note to Ps 2 in the V. ZINKURATIRE – al., *The African Bible*.

¹²⁹ F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 68; R.H. GUNDRY, *Matthew*, 53; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 339; D. HARRINGTON, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 63; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹³⁰ In "This is my beloved Son" (3:17), in the original Greek, "beloved" is not an attribute adjective of "my Son", but a separate title, in apposition. W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31; W. ALLEN, *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 29.

¹³¹ W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

Jesus' baptism, and God's reaction providing the starting of an era of deliverance for his people through Christ.¹³²

The allusions of 3:17 to Ps 2:7 and Gen 22:2 are secondary to the allusion of 3:17 to Isa 42:1.¹³³ Isa 42 is the first of four poems (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12) depicting the rejection and trials of a mysterious servant, though innocent, anointed by the spirit to save Israel and the Gentiles.¹³⁴ The combination of Isa 42:1 with Ps 2:7 is interesting because it affects the content of the Messianic King picture: while Ps 2 envisions God's dominating reign over all others, Isa 42 offers some critique of this view and points to another way of doing.¹³⁵ The Messiah is Jesus, the "Suffering Servant", through whom God will save his people, not through destructive military and imperial power, but through proclaiming justice and through suffering its consequences.¹³⁶

10.3 The Son of God

In the heavenly voice (3:17) there is also an allusion to Exod 4:22.¹³⁷ Exod 4 is part of the struggle to set God's firstborn, the nation Israel, free from Pharaoh's

¹³² J.C. FENTON, *The Gospel of Saint Matthew*, 60; J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 39-40.

¹³³ D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 341. Here it is also difficult to see the allusion to Isa 42:1 because it does not match with the Septuagint version of Isa 42:1. But it does match with Matthew's version of Isa 42:1 in 12:18-20. See *Ibid.*, 337-338.

¹³⁴ A. KIRK – R.E. OBACH, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 44; B.T. VIVIANO, "The Gospel According to Matthew", 638; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹³⁵ E. BORING, "The Gospel of Matthew", 160; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹³⁶ F.V. FILSON, *A Commentary on the Gospel*, 68; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 343; E. BORING, "The Gospel of Matthew", 160; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 103.

¹³⁷ W.F. ALBRIGHT – C.S. MANN, *Matthew*, 31; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 339; W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 104.

oppressive rule. This allusion will imply that in passing through the water, Jesus continues God's liberating work.¹³⁸

For Matthew, "Son of God" is a key Christological title. The other major appellations (Messiah, Son of David, Son of Man, Servant, Lord, Son of Abraham, etc.) and their attendant themes (with 1:18-23) and Jesus' words and deeds, give content to the title "Son of God".¹³⁹ This title reflects the uniqueness of Jesus' relationship with God.¹⁴⁰ The Roman centurion and his companions confess that Jesus is the Son of God (27:54). This confession must be understood in the fullest Christological sense.¹⁴¹ We could identify here an *inclusio* between the "Son of God" by the voice of heaven (3:17) and the "Son of God" by the Roman centurion and his companions (27:54). After Jesus dies symbolically in his baptism, God proclaims him "Son of God". The allusion of 3:17 to Isa 42:1 states that Jesus is the chosen one of God to save the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles will have hope in his name;¹⁴² it is accomplished in the centurion and his companions, who represent the Gentiles.¹⁴³ After Jesus dies on the cross, the Gentiles acknowledge that Jesus is the "Son of God". They are the same soldiers that divided Jesus' garments (27:36) and now they confess and have hope in the name of Jesus. This *inclusio* serves as a frame that provides meaning and unity for all that lies in between: Jesus is the new covenant; those who follow his words and deeds during his life, including his

¹³⁸ W. CARTER, *Matthew and the Margins*, 104.

¹³⁹ J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 34-40; D.C. ALLISON – W.D. DAVIES, *Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 339.

¹⁴⁰ J. KINGSBURY, *Matthew*, 41;

¹⁴¹ R.H. STEIN, *Jesus the Messiah*, 253.

¹⁴² "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. [...] and his name will the Gentiles hope." (12:18-21; Matthew's version of Isa 42:1-4).

¹⁴³ J. MATEOS – F. CAMACHO, *El Evangelio de Mateo*, 278.

baptism and passion, are liberated from their imprisonment of sin and their isolation from God.¹⁴⁴

5. Conclusion

As announced in the introduction, the account of the passion of Jesus (27:32-54) has guided us to interpret 3:13-17 in a way that has disclosed the redemptive value of Jesus' baptism. And it has connected Jesus' baptism with the episode of the fall in the book of Genesis, which is what Matthew really intended.

The episode of the fall in Gen 3 is recapitulated in 3:13-17. John the Baptist as a tempter becomes a parallel figure to the serpent in Gen 3. The serpent and John the Baptist are very tricky. The serpent speaks knowing that God had prevented Adam and Eve from eating the fruit (Gen 3:3), thus, seducing them into disobedience to God. In the same way, when John preaches in the wilderness (3:3), his first words are from Isa 40:3. Thus, John knew that the continuation of Isa 40:3 was the figure of the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). But instead of the figure of the "Suffering Servant", John presents to Jesus the figure of the judge Messiah, thus seducing Jesus into disobedience to God, a temptation. The serpent tempted Eve with something good: "[...] You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen 3:4-5). Like the serpent, John presents a reality that is attractive and good in its appearance. John tempts Jesus with a kind of messianism in which there is no need to suffer, in which Jesus acts like God,

¹⁴⁴ "[...] I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness." Isa 42:6-7 which is the continuation of Isa 42:1-4, mentioned above.

discerning good from evil: “His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (3:11). Jesus’ act of obedience to God becomes a spiritual death because he gave priority to God’s will (which implied suffering), before his own self.

As we have seen, Matthew puts Jesus in the same situation as that of Adam and Eve, but with the difference that Jesus did not fall into the temptation. Jesus’ spiritual death does not destroy him, but gives him life, it unites him with God. He becomes a new man in permanent communication/communion with God. Therefore, we can call Jesus the new Adam, the image of God, the fulfilment of God’s project for man that failed with Adam.

The relationship between Jesus’ baptism and his death and resurrection reveals that these actions are something more than two important moments in the life of Jesus; they are the way of life of Jesus. And here is where lies the redemptive value of Jesus’ baptism; it provides us with a salvific way of life: the denying of oneself in order to give priority to God’s demands. In this way, Jesus becomes the prototype and example for all humans that are bound to the imprisonment of sin and isolation from God. This is in line with the main feature of the apocalyptic style mentioned in chapter one. Jesus’ baptism account (3:13-17) teaches us in which direction we should go. It shows us how to live in our present time, making it meaningful and even salvific.

Chapter III

Theological Implications and Pastoral Applications of 3:13-17

1. Introduction

In the second chapter we have stated that Jesus' baptism becomes a salvific pattern of life for Jesus' followers, the Christians. In this chapter we are going to see how this salvific pattern of life implies a commitment for Christians to work for the integral development of the human being. Another theological implication of 3:13-17 is that this commitment becomes a nuclear element in the life of Christians, and in consequence, of the Church. I think this is an issue that affects us very much today. Should we, as a Church and especially as missionaries, dedicate ourselves only to the care of the souls or should we also work in the development field? Is it proper for the Church to work in development or is that role already fulfilled by the charitable organizations and NGO's that already work in this field? Could development be part of what the Church understands by pastoral? In this chapter we will have a closer look at all these questions to try to give an answer.

2. Theological Implications of 3:13-17

As mentioned above, Jesus' baptism presents a salvific pattern of life, which is Jesus' life. In this section we are going to analyse how this salvific pattern of life is being lived, applied and developed by Jesus, and how it affects us Christians, according to Matthew's Gospel and in reference to the "essence of Christianity".

2.1 *The Situation of Human Beings*

There is a detail in the Gospel that reveals the "essence of Christianity" as the background of Jesus' words:

He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them *from the beginning* made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? [...] He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but *from the beginning it was not so.*" (19:4-8; *emphasis mine*)

In this text Jesus is being ask by the Pharisees if it is lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause. When Jesus speaks about the "beginning" he is referring to the state of human beings before Adam's fall.¹⁴⁵ Before the fall man and women were united. After the fall things changed, Moses had to allow them to divorce their wives, because that kind of unity was not there anymore, but instead, hardness of heart. In this way Jesus makes a contrast between the state of humans before and after the fall.

¹⁴⁵ Jesus quotes Gen 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them." And Gen 2:24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." These two passages refer to the time before Adam's fall (Gen 3), as the continuation of Gen 2:24 prove: "And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed."(Gen 2:25). After the fall, Adam and Eve could not stand naked in front of each other. Therefore when Jesus speaks about the unity between man and woman, he is referring to man's original state, before the fall (Gen 3).

A feature of the hardness of heart of the people after Adam's fall is reflected in the attitude of Jesus' disciples by being afraid in front of Jesus' "godly" manifestations,¹⁴⁶ just like Adam was afraid in front of God after the fall.¹⁴⁷ The cause of people's isolation and imprisonment is their lack of faith in the love of God for them. Otherwise they could repent and ask for forgiveness.¹⁴⁸ In this way, the main obstacle for their redemption is themselves. In the Gospel we can see how Jesus finds the same problem; he cannot preach, liberate and heal people because they don't turn to him, and in consequence, to God:¹⁴⁹

Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" [...] This is why I speak to them in parables, because [...] "this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, *and turn for me to heal them.*" (13:10-15; *emphasis mine*)

The same problem happens when Jesus goes to his home town: "And he did not do many works there, because of their unbelief." (13:58). In consequence, we

¹⁴⁶ This occurs, e.g., when Jesus walks on the waters: "And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, waking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out of fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, 'Take heart, it is I; have no fear.' [...] So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but [...] he was afraid, [...] Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying, 'O man of little faith, why did you doubt?'" (14:25-31). The same happens after Jesus transfiguration (17:5-8); or after his resurrection (28:10).

¹⁴⁷ "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden [...], and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the lord God [...] 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" (Gen 3:8-10) The detail of been afraid because of been naked marks the situation of lack of unity and confidence after the fall.

¹⁴⁸ When God asked Adam why he ate of the forbidden tree, Adam did not believe in the love of God, otherwise he could have repented and asked for forgiveness, but in his state of mind he was unable to think of anything good coming from God. In this way, Adam isolates himself from God, creating a wall of fear around himself.

¹⁴⁹ To turn to Jesus is the same than to turn to God: "he who receives me receives him who sent me." (10:40) As we saw in chapter two, Jesus is the foundation for building a new humanity. It is through him that people will be liberated and cured.

can also find the opposite;¹⁵⁰ it is when people turn to Jesus, believing in his love for them, that they can be liberated and healed.¹⁵¹

2.2 Jesus' Reaction to the Situation of Human Beings

If the situation of isolation and imprisonment of the people is due to their lack of faith in God's love for them, as seen above, then, the main obstacle for their salvation is themselves. Therefore, in order to be freed, people need to die to themselves, undergoing a spiritual death. Thus, they need to turn from themselves and turn to God,¹⁵² which implies to acknowledge God's love for them and to repent and follow Jesus.

In consequence, Jesus' reaction to the isolation and imprisonment will be: first, to proclaim the love of God for the people by words¹⁵³ and deeds;¹⁵⁴ and second, to call them to repentance, abandoning their old practices and embracing a new way of life, e.g.:

You have heard [...] "you shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement. [...] You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies [...] "And in praying do not heap empty phrases as the Gentiles do [...]" (5:21-6:18).

¹⁵⁰ We can find it in: 8:2-3.10-13; 9:21-22.28-30; 15:28.

¹⁵¹ E.g.: "and Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' They said to him, 'Yes, Lord.' Then he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith be it done to you.' And their eyes were opened. [...]" (9:28-30)

¹⁵² As Jesus puts it: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. [...] but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven [...]" (6:19-21).

¹⁵³ E.g. showing them that God cares for men like a father (6:25-34; 7:7-12; 10:26-33)

¹⁵⁴ The whole Gospel has plenty of such deeds as healings and cures of the people that go together with the teaching and the preaching of the kingdom (e.g.: 4:23-24; 9:35; 13:53-54) These healings and cures are signs of God's love for them because people do not automatically repent or get saved by this, as it was the case of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum (11:20-24) or Jerusalem and its scribes and Pharisees (23:29-39).

2.3 The Paradox of Jesus' Baptism

What seems to be a rejection and denial of one's own life, a spiritual death, becomes the narrow gate for gaining a new and better life, an eternal life.¹⁵⁵ This is the paradox of Jesus' baptism and of the dead and risen Messiah, which can be found throughout the Gospel,¹⁵⁶ e.g.:

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would *save* his life will *lose* it, and whoever *loses* his life for my sake will *find* it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? (16:24-26; *emphasis mine*).¹⁵⁷

Here, this eternal life is not exclusively referring to the future, after we die physically, but to our present, after we die spiritually. It is in line with the concept of the kingdom of heaven existing in our own life as anticipation to what we will enter at the end of time.¹⁵⁸ Eternal life is a state of living in union with God, as eternal condemnation is a state of living in isolation from God:

Heaven is the joy of always being with God, with Jesus and his brethren or else a statement that picks up the intuition of a Jewish tradition that called God "heaven." Heaven is God himself. Conversely, hell is existing "without God," separated from God and Jesus: "Depart from me! I don't know you!" [7:23; 25:12.41] [...] So we find Gehenna, the place of punishment by fire, [5:22.29-30; 10:28; 18:8-9] the fire

¹⁵⁵ This is well reflected in the parable of the rich young man: "teacher, what good deed must I do, to have *eternal life*?" [...] 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.'[...] (19:16-22). And also in a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples: "Then Peter said in reply, 'Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What shall we have?' Jesus said to them, '[...] And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit *eternal life*.'" (19:27-29; *emphasis mine*)

¹⁵⁶ Reflected in passages like: 10:37-39; 13:11-16; 16:24-26; 23:9-12; 25:27-30; where the kingdom of heaven is describe as something existing and being experienced in one own life.

¹⁵⁷ Concerning 16:25: "These verbs, 'to save' and 'to lose,' both have a double dimension. In the earthly sense, they signify the maintenance or the loss of existence; in the eschatological sense, they can designate salvation or final damnation. [...] In the earthly sense, 'to save' means to attach oneself to life, 'to lose' means to detach oneself from, to relinquish, not to hold on greedily to, to surrender, to leave, everything. Ultimately, the paradox keeps distinct what separates the temporal from the eternal; to hold on is to lose, to lose is to save." X. LEON-DUFOUR, *Life and Death in the New Testament*, 33.

¹⁵⁸ 4:17; 10:7; 11:12; 12:28; 22:32; 23:13.

that does not die, [7:19; 13:42.50; 25:41] the worm that consumed everything, [6:19] weeping and grinding of teeth, [13:42.50; 24:51] the exterior darkness that shrouds those who are outside the banquet hall.[8:12; 22:13; 25:30] All these images attempt to paint one single reality in all its honour: to be separated from the living God, to be cut off from the source of life, to die ceaselessly.¹⁵⁹

2.4 A Foundation for an Integral Development of the Human Being

Jesus' baptism is a paradigmatic death to oneself. To detach our self from our priorities and put God's will as our only priority is not a once for all action but a way of life. This spiritual death as a way of life is exemplified in the life of Jesus, and is clearly seen from Jesus' baptism to his death and resurrection. It puts us in union with God through Jesus, and gradually transforms us into the original project that God had intended for man, the man in permanent communication/communion with God. It is a demanding, difficult and long way that takes the whole of life. It is a life of service to others,¹⁶⁰ and it demands from us to commit ourselves to work for the integral development of the human being.

When we break our isolation, our union with God through Jesus makes us his co-workers.¹⁶¹ In this way, when someone acts on behalf of Jesus, people would see Jesus in him, and in consequence God.¹⁶² As we can see, there is a channel, we will

¹⁵⁹ X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Life and Death in the New Testament*, 20-21. (*explanations and emphasis mine*)

¹⁶⁰ See: 20:26-28; 23:11;

¹⁶¹ This is been reflected. e.g. when Jesus commissioned his disciples to expel demons and to heal every disease and infirmity: 10:1. Or when Jesus longs for more people to join them to help him: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." (9:35-38). Or when he has compassion of the crowds he asks his disciples to give them to eat themselves: 14:14-16.

¹⁶² Jesus is referring to this when he says: "He who receives you receives me, and the one who receives me receives him who sent me." (10:40). For this see also: 11:27; 16:19; 18:18-20.

be united with God and love God if we love and are united with those who represent Jesus on earth, the shepherds of the Church.¹⁶³ And vice versa, the love of God goes to Jesus, from him to our shepherds and from them to us. As co-workers our main duty is to make the love of God that we have received reach to others and make people turn to God to continue the chain;¹⁶⁴ and it is in this, precisely, that an integral development of the human being consists.

For an integral development I understand to help people develop themselves in order to become the original project of God, the man in permanent communication/communion with God. As seen above, this implies to be compassionate towards the people, as Jesus was, and to bring them to God through our words and deeds.¹⁶⁵ This is exactly what Jesus did: to teach, preach, and specially, to care for the material necessities of the people, healing them, giving them food, etc.

The dimension of the care for the material necessities it is so essential and important that it will be through our works that people will recognise the hand of

¹⁶³ By "shepherds of the Church" I mean the Church's hierarchy: the Pope, Bishops, priests, etc. In this way, we will be fulfilling the great and first commandment: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (22:37).

¹⁶⁴ Which is the second of the greatest and foundational commandments: "you shall love your neighbour as yourself." (22:39-40)

¹⁶⁵ That's why it is call integral development, because it embraces the whole human being, in all his dimensions spiritual and material, as it was understood by Jesus, and as Matthew reflected it: "Matthew surprises us at first glance: he is the only one in the whole of the New Testament to distinguish body and soul so closely. Generally, the soul was treated as the vital life force given and sustained by God; at other times, the body was regarded as the means by which a person could communicate. In both these instances, soul and body did not designate two elements comprising the human person, but complementary aspects of the one unique person. The human person was not composed of an 'immortal' soul and a mortal body. Rather, the human being enjoyed two aspects: that of the soul, by being bound to God the creator for breath; that of the body, which enabled communication with others and with the universe." X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Life and Death in the New Testament*, 10.

God in us.¹⁶⁶ These works are the only sign that Jesus gave of his identity as the expected Messiah.¹⁶⁷ And by our works we will be judged:

When the Son of man comes in his glory, [...] he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see thee [...]?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when did we see thee [...]?" Then he will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me." And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (25:31-46).

It is like this because these two dimensions cannot, in any way, be separated from each other, our works are our words put into practice.¹⁶⁸ If when we are teaching and preaching we are speaking about the love of God; when we are healing, feeding, clothing, etc. we are doing the love of God. To work for an integral development of the human being, giving ourselves in service to others is the way of dying to ourselves and a sign of our unity with our shepherds, with Jesus and with

¹⁶⁶ As it happened to Jesus: "And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, so that the throng wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel. (15:30-31). See also: 8:1; 9:6-8.32-33; 12:22-23.

¹⁶⁷ He gave no other sign of his care for the people: when Jesus is asked by John disciples if he is the one who was to come, Jesus makes reference to his deeds (11:2-6). When Jesus is asked for a sign by the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus tells them that the only sign will be that of Jonah. (12:38-40) Here Jesus is referring to his death and resurrection, which was his biggest deed of love for the people.

¹⁶⁸ If we stress the words (the teaching and preaching) and leave aside the works (the material care for the people) we would eventually become like those scribes and Pharisees that Jesus condemned: "Then said Jesus to the crowds and to his disciples, 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; so practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do; for they preach, but do not practice. They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger.'" (23:1-4).

God. It is the fruit of our love for God, and of the love of God for us,¹⁶⁹ because it is when we receive the love of God that we can love those that cannot give us anything in return.¹⁷⁰

3. Pastoral Applications of 3:13-17

As we have seen, Jesus' baptism, the paradigmatic death to oneself, implies a commitment for the integral development of the human being. In this section we will see that Jesus' baptism is also the foundation of pastorage.

3.1 Church's Understanding of Pastorage

Pastorage comes from the word pastor (shepherd) and refers to his work and duties with his sheep. In the Catholic understanding:

pastorage is founded and has its source in the authentic and serious *love of God* for everybody. [...] The pastorage is according to this *the great call to be at peace with God*. Through the incarnation and the death of Jesus, that has broken the adamitic aeon and the chains of slavery (1 Cor 15:54ff), through the resurrection, the glorification of Jesus and the mission of the Spirit, the salvific will of God is an irrevocable fact. *Christ* in the Spirit [...] is the *mediator of the universal love of God to men*. [...] but it is the *Church* formal cause: in the salvific service she carries on its essence. Pastorage is therefore formally ecclesiastical and causally christocentric.¹⁷¹

According to this definition we can see that Jesus' baptism is also the foundation of pastorage, for pastorage is equal to what I have defined as an integral development of human beings. Both are the salvific action of God toward human beings. Because both have the same source: the love of God. Both have the same

¹⁶⁹ "As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the word and understands it; he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (13:23). See also: 7:17-20; 11:18-19; 12:33.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. with the "essence of Christianity", in chapter one.

¹⁷¹ K. RAHNER – *al.*, *Sacramentum Mundi*. V, 265. (*emphasis mine*).

end: to turn people to God. And both do it in the same way: through the words and deeds of the Church, following the example and inspiration of Jesus.

3.2 *Could Development Be Part of Pastoral?*

By development I mean the “deeds”, the dimension of the care for the material necessities of the human beings. Many people support the idea that the Church should dedicate itself exclusively to the care of souls and leave the care of the material necessities of the people aside, for there are charitable organizations and NGO’s that already exclusively work in this area.¹⁷² First of all, let us see what the Church says about this:

The salvific mission of the Church in relation to the world should be understood as an integral whole. Though spiritual, the mission of the Church involves human promotion even in its temporal aspects. For this reason the mission of the Church cannot be reduced to a monism, no matter how the later is understood. In this mission there is certainly a clear distinction — but not a separation — between the natural and supernatural aspects. This duality is not a dualism. It is thus necessary to put aside the false and useless oppositions between, for example, the Church’s spiritual mission and “diaconia” for the world.¹⁷³

In consequence, when the Church concerns herself with the “development of peoples,” she cannot be accused of going outside her own specific field of competence and, still less, outside the mandate received from the Lord.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² This idea comes out of my own personal experience when arguing with Church people that supported it. In fact this was the main incentive that made me write what I have written in this essay. And concerning them, together with León-Dufour, I question myself: “How can one regard the irony of unbelievers who suggest that to speak of heaven or of judgement at the end of time is tantamount to administering to weak spirits a dose of opium that turns them aside from their present action and encourages flight from this world? Without doubt people have corrupted this terminology by letting people dream of a better world where the sorrows endured here below in this ‘valley of tears’ will be compensated for, without, however, inviting them to struggle to lessen human suffering. But such is not Jesus’ language nor that of the Bible.” X. LEÓN-DUFOUR, *Life and Death in the New Testament*, 46.

¹⁷³ Second Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, *The Church*. II (c), 6.

¹⁷⁴ Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 8. For other Church documents that support the same ideas about development as an essential part of the Church’s mission see also: *Populorum Progressio*, 6-22; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 31; *Centesimus Annus*, 29; *Economic Justice for All*, 327.

To all these. I would like to add that care for the material necessities of human beings by the Church presents some features that cannot be replaced by any charitable organizations and NGO's working in the development field.

First, the development work of the Church is characterised by its permanency and perseverance. The urgency and extreme situations which regularly arise, e.g. in the African continent, have spawned an avalanche of charitable organizations and NGO's offering to provide help at these critical moments. These organizations have good infrastructures and highly qualified personnel, and do inestimable and commendable work for a fixed period of time. But to promote development involves far more than simply attending to emergency situations. Only through continuous contact can development become truly integral and cemented in lasting actions. The building of dispensaries, schools, education projects, agricultural projects, etc., require organizations to live with the people. Only in this way can the distinct aspects of development be brought together. The permanency and perseverance of the Church makes her a real and efficient agent of development with which other organizations can hardly compete.

Second, the Church works for an integral development of human beings. Its care for the material necessities of the people is always oriented to bring the person to the original project of God. In this way, the Church sees man in relation to Christ, providing dignity and the sense of his existence in the world, e.g.:

In the matters of education and development, it is considered the urgency of an integral development of man and of all men in the great community of the nations, especially because the educational efforts suffer of serious deficiencies and inadequacies (DM 4:2). The reflection concerning this panorama leads the Church to propose a vision of education more consistent with the integral development that is desired for all the peoples, which transforms the pupil in the subject of his own development (DM 4:8). The Paschal Christ, "image of the invisible God" (Col

1:15), is the goal that the design of God establishes to the development of man, so that “we all attain the stature of the perfect man” (Eph 4:13).¹⁷⁵

4. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how Jesus’ baptism is the first step of a life that consists of a constant turning to God by constantly dying to ourselves. We have also seen how this pattern of life becomes the foundation of an integral development of the human being, and in consequence, a foundation of the pastoral activity of the Church.

I would like to highlight the importance of the ecclesiastical and christocentric dimensions of this pattern of life. First, when we show the love of God to people, satisfying their spiritual and material necessities, we are acting on behalf of Christ and in union with our shepherds in the Church. Second, our cares for the people are real and tangible “good news” that make the Church more attractive, facilitating an affirmative response when calling people to a union with Christ. Therefore, the integral development not only reinforces the unity and love inside the Church, it also promotes vocations into the Church. In consequence, the integral development is an indispensable element that continuously keeps the Church alive and regenerated.

This integral vision of the spiritual and material aspects of the human being and the attempt to satisfy and develop both aspects is part of the essence of the Church and its founder, God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. To try to change this is to damage the very ground on which the Church’s future stands.

¹⁷⁵ O.A. RODRIGUEZ, “El Desarrollo Humano. Una Llamada Permanente de la Iglesia”, 20. (Cardinal O.A. Rodríguez Madariaga’s explanations).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Having reached to this point, we can now affirm that chapter one satisfactorily provided the necessary tools to enable us to analyse Jesus' baptism under the light of his death and resurrection in the second chapter. This analysis helped us to identify a parallelism between Jesus' baptism and the fall of Adam (Gen 3) that provided the proper context for the study of the relation between Jesus' baptism and his death and resurrection. All this has helped us to understand a bit more the redemptive dimension of Jesus' baptism as a salvific pattern of life that leads to Jesus' death on the cross.

The context of Jesus' baptism is the situation of isolation and imprisonment in which humanity is immersed. Through his baptism Jesus redeemed humanity because he established the foundations of our salvation. By being obedient to God, to the apparent detriment of his own self, he became the new Adam, the man in permanent communion/communication with God. His union with God, and in consequence, his mission as the mediator of God's love and salvation was ratified. By his baptism Jesus became the example and herald to be followed by all human beings. He provided a narrow gate out of our prison: to deny oneself in order to turn to God and obey his will.

In the third chapter we have seen how Jesus' baptism is the first step of a life that consists in detaching ourselves from our own priorities and in putting God's will as our only priority. Basically, this dying to ourselves consists in our full time dedication to the integral development of the human being. This integral development is the salvific action of God toward all people and thus, his will for all humankind.

The integral development of human beings is nothing more and nothing less than what the Magisterium of the Catholic Church understands by *pastorale*. It basically consists in communicating God's love and in bringing people from their isolation to their real fulfilment as human beings through our words and deeds. By helping other people we equally help ourselves for we get closer to God and to the original project of man intended by God: Jesus, the new Adam. It is only by losing our life for Jesus' sake that we could ever find eternal life.

We could conclude therefore, that the pattern of life that Jesus' baptism presents provides salvation for us and at the same time makes us mediators of God's salvation to others. Therefore, this pattern of life is the real nucleus and essence of the sacramental dimension of the Catholic Church. The Church's view of the human being as a whole, promoting his spiritual and material dimensions is what makes it strong, because it reinforces the love and unity in Christ among its members. It makes it attractive and alive, because it promotes new vocations into the Church, a real and effective salvific agent of God. Therefore, the neglect of any of these two dimensions would be an attempt against the endurance and salvation of the Church itself.

ABBREVIATIONS

1 Cor	First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians
<i>AB</i>	Anchor Bible
<i>ABD</i>	FREEDMAN, D.N., ed., <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , I-VI, New York 1992.
Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
A.D.	<i>Anno Domini</i> — The year of the Lord, year 0 of our era.
<i>al.</i>	alii — other persons
B.C.	Before Christ — Before the year 0 of our era.
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
<i>Centesimus Annus</i>	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus. On the Hundred Anniversary of Rerum Novarum</i> , 1991.
cf.	confer — compare
<i>CNTS</i>	RYAN, M.R., ed., <i>Contemporary New Testament Studies</i> , Collegeville 1965.
Col	Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians
Deut	Book of Deuteronomy
DSB	Daily Study Bible
<i>Economic Justice for All</i>	U.S. Catholic Bishops, <i>Economic Justice for All</i> , 1986.
ed.	edited by
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> : for example
<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>	PAUL VI, <i>Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi. On Evangelization in the Modern World</i> , 1975.
Exod	Book of Exodus
Gen	Book of Genesis
Heb	Letter to the Hebrews
<i>IBS</i>	Irish Biblical Studies
ICC	International Critical Commentary
ICR	International Catholic Review
i.e.	<i>id est</i> — that is
Isa	Book of Isaiah
John	Gospel of John
<i>JSNT</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
Matt	Gospel of Matthew
Mark	Gospel of Mark
MCSPA	Missionary Community of Saint Paul the Apostle
NGO's	Non Governmental Organizations
<i>NIB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible. General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, &</i>

	<i>Reflections for Each Book of the Bible Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books</i> , I-XII., Nashville 1995.
<i>NJBC</i>	FITZMYER, J.A. – BROWN, R.E. – MURPHY, R.E., ed., <i>New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i> , London 1993.
NT	New Testament
NTC	New Testament in Context
NTL	The New Testament Library
NTM	New Testament Message
NTSR	New Testament for Spiritual Reading
OT	Old Testament
<i>Populorum Progressio</i>	PAUL VI, <i>Encyclical Letter Populorum Progressio</i> , 1967
Ps	Psalm
Q	Quelle Source
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SDB	Salesian of Don Bosco
<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i>	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis. On the Twentieth Anniversary of Populorum Progressio</i> , 1987.
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPS	Saint Patrick Society
<i>TDNT</i>	G. KITTEL – G. FRIEDRICCH, ed., <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , I-X., Grand Rapids 1968, 1971 ³ .
TS	Theological Studies

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