**Spirituality VI**

 **Spiritual Rebirth**

Spiritual rebirth refers to the new life a person finds when he or she becomes a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This concept is also referred to as “salvation,” “regeneration,” or being “born again.”

Before spiritual rebirth, all humans are slaves to sin (John 8:34) and spiritually dead in their trespasses (Colossians 2:13). When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, they brought sin and death into the world. Every one of their descendants is cursed with a sin nature—a desire to live contrary to God’s will. As we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, we all live under the same curse (Romans 3:23) and deserve death as punishment (6:23). To save us from the curse, Christ Jesus came from heaven to live on earth as the perfect God-man and die a painful death on a cross, taking upon Himself the punishment we all deserve. He then conquered death by rising from the grave three days later. After His ascension back to heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to live in all who put their faith in Him. The entrance of the Holy Spirit into a soul is what brings about the spiritual rebirth of that person.

When the Pharisee Nicodemus visited Jesus one night, Jesus informed him that, in order to see the kingdom of God, he must be born again (John 3:3). This was a concept that Nicodemus was unable to grasp, to Jesus’ surprise. Jesus explained further: “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ . . . Do you not understand these things? . . . For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:6–7, 10, 16). In saying that Nicodemus must be born again, Jesus was telling him that he must go through spiritual rebirth—he must start a new life in the Spirit—before he could enter God’s kingdom.

Jesus is the only way to forgiveness for sin and spiritual rebirth (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). When we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection, we pass from death to life; our sins are forgiven, and we are spiritually reborn. We are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6:18). At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit enters the believer, and “the Spirit gives life” (John 6:63). The Spirit remains in us as a deposit guaranteeing our salvation (Ephesians 1:13–14) and as a guide for the new life of spiritual rebirth (John 16:13; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:25). “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

**ELEVEN GREAT PRINCIPLES OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH (on B-P Diocese/Ministry Classes)**

**II. THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.** The most important task and mission of Jesus Christ, according to His own declaration and the words of His disciples, as recorded in the Gospels and documents of the first two centuries of our era – was the proclaiming and establishing of the Kingdom of God on earth. From the moment He returned from the wilderness where He had endured trials for 40 days and nights, and said to the multitudes, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” Matt. 4:17, until the time when, outstretched upon the cross, He whispered with His last breath, “it is finished,” our Nazarene Master served the great purpose of preparing humanity for the Kingdom of God on earth.

* The Apostles and their immediate successors took up this appointed task, and for its sake suffered and died the death of martyrs; but later generations forgot it, and became entangled in a system of Church politics directed from the Vatican. Official Christendom devoted itself to the unraveling of theological problems, to the building of magnificent cathedrals of stone, brick, gold and silver, and in curtailing human thought and freedom, serving the kings, lords and potentates of the world in general and forgot about the building of a regenerated living society, the Kingdom of God on earth.
* For this reason, there arose among the Polish immigrants in America, the Polish National Catholic Church, in order to remind the world, and especially the Polish people, of that immortal and indispensable idea of organizing a Divine Society founded on love, heroic courage, cooperation, righteousness and brotherhood. “Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Christ has come nigh to us.”
* Repent that you have wasted so much time, talents, strength of soul and body, on useless enterprises, struggle, exploitation, mutual deception, treachery, trafficking in the holiest feelings and ideals.
* Cease doing unrighteousness.
* Arise and join the ranks, begin a new period of your own life, that of the Polish people and of all humanity. Go forth, and may all that the Eternal Wisdom has decreed, be fulfilled in you.

**III. SALVATION, THE CONDITION OF ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. Religion is the living bond uniting man with God; it is the most powerful, most noble and holy sentiment of the human heart and the highest degree of human intellect. It arises in the mystery of the soul, reveals itself through faith, unbounded trust and good social deeds.

* No one should, therefore, debase, ridicule, or traffic in religion, or use it for his own personal gain. Whoever does this, exposes himself to the dreadful consequences, rejection by God and humanity. History brands none so severely as those who traffic in God, virtue, faith and the sacraments; brands them as blasphemers, perjurers, sacrilegious, and destroyers of that which is sacred.
* “Woe, shepherds of Israel cries the great Israelite prophet to all those who abuse religion by using it to serve their low, base and selfish purposes, who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth with none to search or seek for them. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, that they may not be food for them.” Ezekiel 34:2-10.
* Were not these prophetic words fulfilled in the course of human history, on the priests of Egypt, Judea and Rome? Might they not likewise be fulfilled on the Polish priests if they turn not from their course of disloyalty toward God? The same causes bring the same results. The same hand which wrote on the wall of the Babylon palace Mene, Tekel, Upharsin may likewise write down in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznan, Lwow, Lodz. Vilna and Czestochowa. “Woe.”

**IV. THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.** The leading of man into the Kingdom of God, that perfect state of human society for which mankind yearns and toward which it constantly aspires, is called, in the language of religion, a saving work or salvation. According to the teaching of Christ our Lord, the Kingdom of Heaven is the state of a people being united with God in boundless love and completely devoted to Him; living and working in cooperation with Him. In order to attain this state, man must go through a prolonged process of inward changes, he must become spiritually regenerated and above all, free himself from sin and its consequences.

* Sin is a misunderstanding of the being and purpose of God on the part of the individual, the nation, and even all of humanity. The results of this lack of knowledge of God within oneself and the denial of Him, the source of all life, is for man simply fatal, crushing. Left to himself in his own spiritual and moral life, sinful man not only fails to develop and progress, but on the contrary, regresses and becomes spiritually dwarfed. For a time he vegetates and then deteriorates, wastes away; and would surely perish if not for the help of the Father Creator who does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.
* God accomplishes this through Jesus Christ. The saving work of the Divine Mediator depends on this: that He reveals to man his primary and ultimate goal – eternal happiness; that God in His Divine compassion and righteousness will bind anew the severed ties between him and the Creator and will renew again the life-giving inner moral relationship. Man is a social being, not only in the sense that he lives with others similar to himself in a union of causation and must cooperate with them for the common good if he were to profit by it; but also in a higher and larger sense, that he is dependent on the First Cause of all life, on the Supreme Organizer of the Universe; being joined to Him by spiritual and moral ties, which are the determining factors of his conscious existence, his degree of development and the final goal toward which he aspires.
* A man may not with impunity isolate himself from nature, from family, people, nation, state, Church or God. Every such deviation brings about fatal and terrible consequences; above all, it severs the relationship with God. This produces a spiritual desert in man which makes him unproductive and discourages all that we call beautiful, moral, creative and the spiritual life of man; and fills him with the opposite impulses, a brutish, low and base life. Borne away on the whirlpool of bestial and inert living, man wallows lower and lower, soiling and polluting himself in the depths of shameless and evil doings; ’til he descends into an abyss, at the bottom of which awaits him either the complete decay of his humanity, despair, suicide, heinous crime or else something more dire: hell; Gehenna. And then Christ saves him from extinction. Awakens in him a sense of awe and loathing; sorrow for his wasted life; longing for that which is better and holier. He shows him God’s Divine mercy and righteousness, reveals to him his wretched heart; so that from it would flow its filth, poison, misery, despair and a ray of hope enter in-the Grace of God, united with repentance, confession and resolve.
* With the hand of a Great Physician and Most Loving Friend, Christ binds up the wounds of the rescued man and restores him to the Church, family and nation; but above all, restores him to his own self and to God. He helps him to be saved forever.
* For since the greatest privilege of man is salvation, so God’s holiest right is to assist man in attaining it

**Tennents and Aims of the PNCC (on B-P Diocese/Ministry Classes)**

* The principles of the Polish National Catholic Church are an expression of the convictions of those who believe that the salvation of mankind and their personal relationship to God cannot be the object of bargaining and cannot be forced upon mankind but must flow from the free conscience of man.
* The Polish National Catholic Church is a voluntary union of those who recognize the religious principles of this Church as the norms and rules of their lives.
* The Polish National Catholic Church teaches and professes all the religious truths which God revealed, Jesus Christ proclaimed, and the Apostles and their successors established as the foundation of the Christian Catholic Faith, namely: that God created the world; that man needs for his perfection, happiness and salvation God’s gift of divine grace; that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world; that the human soul is immortal; and that through the Holy Spirit God governs the Church and enables it to regenerate and convert human society and to unite it under one Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord. In this manner the kingdom of God on earth is realized.
* This Church possesses Apostolic Succession by reason of the consecration of the Reverend Francis Hodur by the following Bishops of the Old Catholic Church of Holland: Archbishop Gerard Gul of Utrecht, Bishop Jan van Thiel of Haarlem, and Bishop Michael Bartholomew Spit of Deventer, in Saint Gertrude’s Cathedral, Utrecht, Holland, on September 29, 1907, as Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church of America.
* The religious principle of the Polish National Catholic Church is her teaching that the Church cannot save man without his sincere, personal cooperation with God. The Church teaches that the wisdom of God sanctifies and helps man in the fulfillment of his mission and the attainment of his goal on earth. A living faith in God and good works flowing from that faith will save man. The Church of Christ is the true way leading man to know the Truth and to salvation.
* The clergy should reveal the will of God and expound it by word and deed – that is, live an exemplary Christian life. Churches which claim that only through them man can be saved misrepresent the teaching of Christ and openly mislead people. Jesus Christ taught differently. He said that he “who believes and is baptized is saved.” (Mark 16:16, John 3:5) Those who believe in His mission are regenerated through repentance and grace of God to lead a life of good works are saved through Christ’s redemptive action. No blind faith in a specific church but righteous living brings salvation. St. Paul, the foremost interpreter of the Gospel, says “Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” (I Cor. 13:1-2)
* The same Apostle confirms in the concluding words of chapter 13, verse 13, that deeds arising from the love of God and neighbor mean more than faith…”Faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity! Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:10)
* Christ Himself spoke to those who had faith and performed miracles in His name but lead a godless life: “and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you evil doers.” (Matthew 7:23)
* The most important objective of the Polish National Catholic Church, as the Catholic Church of Christ, is to maintain, enrich and develop the life of God in the soul of man. To help man know God and His holy Being so that from this knowledge and understanding may flow blessing, light, love, strength and inner satisfaction which no person or thing can give, save God – this is the most important goal of the Polish National Catholic Church.
* As a nucleus of Christ’s revelation, the above statements are to us worthy religious truths concerning God, the individual, state, nation, and all mankind. It is, therefore, necessary to know and fulfill them. These Christian truths recorded and expounded by the prophets and taught by the Apostles and other great disciples of the Divine Master of Nazareth were adhered to by saintly and noble people for nearly two thousand years. They are all embodied in the Confession of Father of the Polish National Catholic Church. May they be a living rule and guide for our daily lives.

**Spiritual rebirth** refers to the **new life** a person experiences when they become a believer in **Jesus Christ**. This concept is also known as **salvation**, **regeneration**, or being **born again**. Let’s explore this further:

1. **Before Spiritual Rebirth**:
	* All humans are **slaves to sin** (John 8:34) and **spiritually dead** in their trespasses (Colossians 2:13).
	* When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they introduced sin and death into the world. As their descendants, we all inherit a **sin nature**—a desire to live contrary to God’s will.
	* We live under the same curse and deserve death as punishment (Romans 3:23; 6:23).
2. **The Solution**:
	* Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man, came to earth and died on the cross, taking upon Himself the punishment we all deserve.
	* He conquered death by rising from the grave.
	* After His ascension, Jesus sent the **Holy Spirit** to dwell in all who put their faith in Him.
3. **Being Born Again**:
	* When the Pharisee Nicodemus visited Jesus, Jesus told him that to see the kingdom of God, he must be **born again** (John 3:3).
	* Nicodemus struggled to grasp this concept, so Jesus explained further.
	* Jesus emphasized that spiritual rebirth is necessary before entering God’s kingdom.
	* Jesus is the **only way** to forgiveness for sin and spiritual rebirth (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
4. **The Transformation**:
	* When we trust in Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, and His resurrection, we **pass from death to life**.
	* Our sins are forgiven, and we are **spiritually reborn**.
	* The Holy Spirit enters the believer, guaranteeing our salvation and guiding our new life (Ephesians 1:13–14; John 16:13; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:25).
	* As a result, we become a **new creation** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Remember, the **Holy Spirit** within us enables us to live out this spiritual rebirth and remain free from the power of sin (Galatians 5:16)

**End of Spirituality VI**