

**SPEECH  
AT EMMA ALESSA'S BAPTISMAL CELEBRATION  
Ryttylä  
08.06.2014**

Dear Anna and Dietmar, dear sponsors / godparents (Alexandra, Sanna, Holger, and Ilkka), and dear friends!

Christian baptism is not an invention of the Church, Christian baptism is instituted by Jesus Christ Himself. In this short presentation, my aim is briefly to explain the basics for the baptism of Emma Alessa.

### **1. Holy God and sinful man**

- 1.1.** *Firstly*, according to the Bible there is the Eternal God and His creation, which includes among other things human beings like ourselves. In the beginning, all creation, including mankind, was created good. But later, there was the Fall of Man. After that all people are born to this world sinful. In order to demonstrate this we only need to turn on television or radio for a while. Because of sin, the whole mankind has been cut off from the presence of God, and put under everlasting death instead.
- 1.2.** The Bible also speaks of the kingdom of God and of the kingdom of evil, or, rather, of the world that is under the dominion of the evil. After the Fall of Man, every human being is born in this world, concerning the Kingdom of God, on the wrong side of the border.

### **2. Atonement for the sins**

- 2.1.** *Secondly*, God was determined to help the fallen mankind and to save it through His Son. God's only begotten Son, who was born from God in eternity before the beginning of any creation. He was "born again" as a human being here in the world of sinners. In Him, God became a man. We sinners put Him to death by crucifying him on Calvary. And so He reconciled all mankind to God. He, who was without any sin, died for the punishment of our sins achieving full atonement for the whole world.
- 2.2.** But God does not give the forgiveness of the sins apart of Christ, but He wants to make us, who were his enemies, His beloved children and move us from the darkness of this world to the kingdom of God.
- 2.3.** Therefore, after His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ on Ascension Day, just before His ascension to heaven, set two conditions for getting into the kingdom of God. They are Christian baptism and Christian faith, of which the latter one – namely Christian faith – is a gift of the first one – namely, Christian baptism. To demonstrate this, a baptismal font has been situated in many old churches opposite to the altar, quite near to the main entrance of the church. Standing there, the baptismal font reminded the people that it is through Christian baptism one enters the kingdom of God.

### 3. Christian baptism

- 3.1.** *Thirdly*, in itself Christian baptism is quite an insignificant occasion – so trivial, that we easily feel offended by it. The outward form and the meaning, which the Bible gives to it, seem to be in contrast to each other. A fistful of water in this land of hundreds of thousands of lakes – how could that save a man to everlasting life? Impossible!
- 3.2.** We know well that water is actually quite necessary for any organic life. Without water, no living cell could be formed. Nevertheless, what gives Christian baptism its value does not depend on this. The value of Christian baptism is not determined by us, but by the authority of Him who has instituted it, namely the Triune God Himself.
- 3.3.** Let us take a 100 € note as an example. Its inherent value, the prices of paper, colors, watermarks, safety threads, and holograms altogether is quite insignificant. The actual value of money is, nevertheless, determined according to how the respective central bank, in this case, the European Central Bank, has set it to be.
- 3.4.** Likewise, the value of Christian baptism is determined according to what its institutor, namely, Triune God, says of it. And He says of it among other things as follows:

*Jesus says: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mt 28:18-20)*

*Jesus says: “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mk 16:16).*

*Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (Christian baptism) and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (Jh 3:5).*

*Finally*, in addition to being the rebirth as God's child and the entrance into the kingdom of God, the Christian baptism of *Emma Alessa* is also a covenant God makes with *Emma Alessa*. From God's part the covenant of Christian baptism is solid, always-enduring, and, therefore, never in need of renewal. The Bible says: *If we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself* (2 Tm 2:13). We are always allowed to return to the covenant of the Christian baptism. When *Emma Alessa* is old enough to understand, Anna and Dietmar and godparents, please, let her know also this.

Amen.