

In *The First Apology*, written ca. 150, **Justin Martyr** (ca. 100–ca. 165), a Roman philosopher who became a Christian, discusses the centrality and significance of both baptism and the eucharistic meal for Christian living. He also contrasts Christian liturgical rites with parallel practices found in other Greco-Roman religions.

JUSTIN MARTYR

*The First Apology, 61–67*

61. I will also explain the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we were made new through Christ, since if we left this out in our exposition we would seem to falsify something. As many as are persuaded and believe that the things we teach and say are true, and undertake to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and ask God with fasting for the remission of their past sins, while we pray and fast with them.<sup>7</sup> Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are born again in the same manner of rebirth by which we ourselves were born again,<sup>8</sup> for they then receive washing in water in the name of God the Father and Master of all, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup> For Christ also said, "Except you are born again, you will not enter into the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>10</sup> Now it is clear to all that it is impossible for those who have once come into being to enter into their mothers' wombs.<sup>11</sup> And it is said through Isaiah the prophet, as we wrote before, in what manner those who have sinned and repent shall escape from their sins. He thus spoke: "Wash, become clean, put away evil doings from your souls, learn to do good, judge the orphan and plead for the widow, and come and let us reason together, says the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool, and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if you will not listen to me, a sword will devour you; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things."<sup>12</sup> And we have learned from the Apostles this reason for this [rite].<sup>13</sup> Since at our first birth we were born of necessity without our knowledge, from moist seed<sup>14</sup> by the intercourse of our parents with each other, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked behavior; in order that we should not remain children of necessity and ignorance, but of free choice and knowledge, and obtain remission of the sins formerly committed,<sup>15</sup> there is named at the water over him who has chosen to be born again, and has repented of his sinful acts, the name of God the Father and Master of all; they who lead to the washing the one who is to be washed call on this [name] alone. For no one can give a name to the

ineffable God; and if anyone should dare say there is one, he raves with a hopeless insanity. And this washing is called illumination, as those who learn these things are illuminated in the mind.<sup>16</sup> And he who is illuminated is washed in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all the things about Jesus.

62. And the demons, indeed, having heard this washing proclaimed through the prophet, arranged that those who enter their temples and are about to approach them to offer libations and burnt offerings should also sprinkle themselves;<sup>17</sup> and they cause them also to wash themselves completely as they approach, before they enter into the sanctuaries where their images are. And the order, too, given by the priests to those who enter into the temples and to those who serve them [i.e., the demons], to remove their shoes,<sup>18</sup> the devils imitated when they learned what happened to Moses, the prophet mentioned before. For at that time when Moses was ordered to go down into Egypt and to lead out the people of the Israelites who were there, as he was tending the sheep of his maternal uncle in the land of Arabia,<sup>19</sup> our Christ conversed with him in the form of fire out of a bush, and said, "Unloose your sandals and come near and hear."<sup>20</sup> But when he had unloosed them and drawn near he heard that he was

7. See *Didache* VII.4 above. The period of catechumenate ends with prayer and fasting. (The notes for this selection are by Gerhart and Udoh.)

8. On baptism as a "new birth," see Jn 3:3–8; 1 Pet 1:3.

9. See also *Didache* VII above, and Mt 28:19.

10. Jn 3:3–5; Mt 18:3.

11. See Jn 3:4.

12. Isa 1:16–18, 20.

13. Words in brackets have been added by the translator for clarification. The apostolic tradition to which Justin appeals can be found, for instance, in Mk 1:8; Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:26–27, 33; 3:3–10; Acts 1:4–5; 19:1–7; Rom 6:3–11; 1 Cor 12:12–13; Gal 3:27–29; Col 2:11–15; 1 Pet 3:18–22.

14. Even the "new birth" is associated with moisture. On the contrast between baptism and natural birth, see 1 Pet 1:23.

15. See Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom 3:23–25; 6:4; Gal 4:22–26; 5:1; 1 Pet 1:14.

16. Justin is the first Christian writer to use the noun *phōtismos*, "illumination," specifically to refer to baptism. The verbal form of the word is used in Heb 6:4 (see also 10:32) with reference to the enlightenment received at baptism. The verb is otherwise used in the New Testament to refer to Christian faith (see 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 1:18; 2 Tim 1:9–10). "Illumination," for Justin, is the presence of the whole Logos in the soul of the baptized Christian.

17. See also Tertullian, *On Baptism*, 5. Sprinkling oneself was a common part of the rites of purification practiced in pagan temples.

18. See also Tertullian, *Apology*, 40.14.

19. See Ex 3:1. Justin's statement that Moses "was tending the sheep of his maternal uncle" probably indicates a confusion with Jacob's tending the sheep of Laban (see Gen 29:9–30; 31:10–13), since Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, not uncle.

20. See Ex 3:5.

to go down into Egypt and lead out the people of the Israelites there; and he received mighty power from Christ, who spoke to him in the form of fire, and went down and led out the people having done great and marvelous things; which if you want to learn about, you will learn accurately from his writings.

63. And even now all the Jews teach that the nameless God spoke to Moses. Wherefore the prophetic Spirit, accusing them through Isaiah the prophet mentioned before, as we wrote before, said: "The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel does not know me and my people do not understand."<sup>21</sup> And Jesus the Christ, because the Jews did not know the nature of the Father and the Son, in like manner upbraided them and himself said: "No one knows the Father except the Son, nor the Son except the Father and those to whom the Son will reveal Him."<sup>22</sup> Now the Word of God is His Son, as we have said before. But he is also called "Angel" and "Apostle";<sup>23</sup> for He announces whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to testify to what is announced, as Our Lord Himself also said: "He that hears me hears Him who sent me."<sup>24</sup> This also will be made clear from the writings of Moses. For so it is written in them: "And the Angel of God spoke to Moses in a flame of fire out of the bush and said, I am He who is, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, the God of your fathers. Go down into Egypt and bring out my people."<sup>25</sup> Those who wish to can learn what followed from this; for it is impossible to write down everything in these [pages]. But these words were spoken to prove that Jesus the Christ is Son of God and Apostle, being of old the logos, and appeared now in the form of fire, now in the image of bodiless creatures;<sup>26</sup> but now having become man by the will of God for the human race He endured whatever sufferings the demons managed to have brought upon Him by the senseless Jews. Who though they have it clearly stated in the writings of Moses, "And the Angel of God spoke to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush and said, I am He who is, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," yet say that he who said these things was the Father and Demiurge of the Universe. Whence also the prophetic Spirit reproves them saying, "Israel does not know me, and the people has not understood me."<sup>27</sup> And Jesus again, as we have already shown, while he was with them said, "No one knows the Father except the Son, nor the Son except the Father and those to whom the Son will reveal Him." Therefore the Jews being throughout of the opinion that the Father of the Universe had spoken to Moses, though He who spoke to Him was the Son of God, who is called both Angel and

Apostle, are rightly censured both by the prophetic Spirit and by Christ Himself, since they knew neither the Father nor the Son. For those who affirm that the Son is the Father are shown neither to have known the Father, nor to know that the Father of the Universe has a Son; who being the logos and First-begotten is also God.<sup>28</sup> And formerly He appeared in the form of fire and in the image of a bodiless being to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your rule,<sup>29</sup> as we said before, He became man of a virgin according to the will of the Father for the salvation of those who believe in Him and endured both contempt and suffering, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death.<sup>30</sup> And what was said out of the bush to Moses, "I am He who is, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and the God of your fathers," signified that they though dead are yet in existence and are men and women belonging to Christ Himself.<sup>31</sup> For they were the first of all people who busied themselves with the search after God, Abraham being the Father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses also wrote.

64. From what has been said you can understand how the demons, in imitation of what was said through Moses, contrived also to raise up the image of the so-called Kore over the springs of the waters saying that she was a daughter of Zeus. For Moses said, as we wrote before:<sup>32</sup> "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was invisible and unfurnished, and the Spirit of God moved over the waters."<sup>33</sup> In imitation, then, of what is said of the Spirit of God moving on the water they spoke of Kore, daughter of Zeus.<sup>34</sup> And likewise behaving with trickery they spoke of

21. Isa 1:3.

22. See Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22. Justin's passage varies considerably from the biblical passages.

23. See Ex 3:2. In the Greek, the words are synonyms. For Christ as "Apostle," see Heb 3:1. Justin is mistaken, however, because the New Testament does not call Christ an "angel." Nevertheless, in *Dialogue*, 60, Justin argues, against Trypho, that "angel" and "God" are identical, since the Logos (Christ) is both God and Angel.

24. See Lk 10:16; Mt 10:40; also Jn 12:44; 14:24.

25. See Ex 3:2, 6, 10, 14, 15.

26. "Bodiless creatures," that is, angels; see Ex 3:2.

27. Isa 1:3.

28. See Jn 1:1; Phil 2:6.

29. Justin's *First Apology* is addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, his son, and the Roman Senate and people.

30. This statement and paragraph 61 above might contain an early baptismal creed.

31. Ex 3:14; see also Mk 12:26-27; Mt 22:31-32; Lk 20:37-38.

32. See *First Apology*, 59.2.

33. Gen 1:1-2.

34. See possibly Diodorus Siculus, 5.4, on the mysteries of Andania.

Athena as a daughter of Zeus, not by sexual union, but, since they knew that God conceived and made the world through the logos, they spoke of Athena as the first thought,<sup>35</sup> which we consider to be very absurd, to bring forward the female form of an intellectual image. And likewise their actions condemn the others who are called sons of Zeus.

65. But we, after thus washing the one who has been convinced and has assented<sup>36</sup> [to our instruction], lead him to those who are called brethren,<sup>37</sup> where they are assembled; and we offer prayers in common for ourselves and for the one who has been illuminated and for all others everywhere, that we may be accounted worthy, having learned the truth, by our deeds also to be found good citizens and guardians of what is commanded, so that we may be saved with eternal salvation. Having ended the prayers we greet one another with a kiss.<sup>38</sup> Then there is brought to the Ruler of the Brethren<sup>39</sup> bread and a cup of water and [a cup] of wine mixed with water, and he taking them sends up praise and glory to the Father of the Universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and offers thanksgiving<sup>40</sup> at some length for our being accounted worthy to receive these things from Him. When he has concluded the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present assent by saying, Amen. Amen in the Hebrew language signifies "so be it."<sup>41</sup> And when the Ruler has given thanks and all the people have assented, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present a portion of the eucharistized bread and wine and water, and they carry it away to those who are absent.<sup>42</sup>

66. And this food is called among us eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things which we teach are true, and has received the washing that is for the remission of sins and for rebirth, and who so lives as Christ handed down. For we do not receive these things as common bread nor common drink; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior having been incarnate by God's logos took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food eucharistized through the word of prayer that is from Him, from which our blood and flesh are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who became incarnate.<sup>43</sup> For the Apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels,<sup>44</sup> thus handed down what was commanded them: that Jesus took bread and having given thanks said: "Do this for my memorial, this is my body"; and likewise He took the chalice and having given thanks said: "This is my blood"; and gave it to them alone.<sup>45</sup> Which also the wicked demons have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra and handed down to be

done; for that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain words said over them in the secret rites of initiation, you either know or can learn.<sup>46</sup>

67. And afterward we constantly remind each other of these things. And the wealthy come to the aid of the poor, and we are always together. Over all that we receive we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. And on the day called Sunday<sup>47</sup> all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits.<sup>48</sup> Then when the reader has finished, the Ruler in a discourse instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers; and, as we said before, when we have finished the prayer, bread is brought and wine and water, and the Ruler likewise offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability,<sup>49</sup> and the people assent, saying the Amen; and the distribution and the partaking of the eucharistized elements is to each, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And those who prosper, and so wish, contribute what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the Ruler, who takes care of the orphans and widows, and those who, on account of sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourners among us, and in a word [He] is the guardian of all those in need. But we

35. Athena was considered to have been born full-grown from Zeus's brain.

36. That is, by confessing the faith, possibly in the form of a credal interrogation.

37. See Mt 23:8.

38. This is the liturgical kiss of peace which evolved from the kiss of love and fellowship (see 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Pet 5:14).

39. That is, the head of the Christian community, probably the bishop, though Justin does not use the technical term.

40. That is, in Greek, "eucharistia."

41. The original thanksgiving of the Last Supper is expanded with elements borrowed from Judaism, including the response "Amen," which was left untranslated (because it was untranslatable) in the liturgy after 100 CE.

42. This is the earliest mention of this custom.

43. See Mk 14:22-24; Mt 26:26-28; Lk 22:17-20; Jn 6:35-58; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

44. The term "memoir" is probably an imitation of Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates*. Justin's "Gospels" seem to have corresponded in substance to our synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

45. Mk 14:22-24; Mt 26:26-28.

46. See the section on Mithraism in chapter 2 of this volume and Tertullian, *On Prescription against Heretics*, 40.4.

47. In Christian literature "Sunday" is usually called "the Lord's Day." The Sabbath (Saturday) remained for Christians the day of rest until the fourth century.

48. This is the first reference to the reading of the Gospels as part of the liturgy.

49. See *Didache*, X.7, above.

all hold this common gathering on Sunday, since it is the first day on which God transforming darkness and matter made the Universe, and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For they crucified Him on the day before Saturday, and on the day after Saturday, He appeared<sup>50</sup> to His Apostles and disciples and taught them these things which we have passed on to you also for your consideration.

From Saint Justin Martyr, *The First and Second Apologies*, translated by Leslie William Barnard, *Ancient Christian Writers*, no. 56 (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 66-72.

<sup>49</sup> In *The Apostolic Tradition*, written ca. 215, Hippolytus (ca. 170-ca. 236) describes the interrogations—a questioning of candidates prior to baptism. He also lists the occupations and actions that would prevent conversion.

HIPPOLYTUS

### *The Apostolic Tradition, 15-21*

#### 15. On Newcomers to the Faith

Those who present themselves for the first time for instruction [lit., to hear the word]<sup>51</sup> shall first of all be brought to the teachers before the congregation arrives. They shall be asked about the reason for coming to the faith, and those who have brought them [i.e., their sponsors] will testify about whether they are ready for instruction [lit., capable of hearing the word]. They shall be asked about the kind of life they lead: whether he [sic] has a wife or whether he is a slave. And if any is the slave of one of the faithful, whether he has his master's approval for taking instruction. If his master does not testify that he is a good man, let him be rejected. If his master is a pagan, teach him to please his master lest scandal arise. If, however, one [of the candidates] have a wife, or a wife, a husband, let them be taught to be content, husband with wife and wife with husband. If, however, someone does not have a wife, let him be taught not to fornicate but to take a wife according to the law, or to remain single [lit., as he is].<sup>52</sup> Should someone be possessed of a demon, he is not to be instructed in the teaching until he is pure.

#### 16. On Jobs and Professions

Moreover, inquiry shall be made about the jobs and occupations of those who seek to be instructed. If anyone runs a house of prostitution, let him cease or be sent away. If anyone

is a sculptor or painter, let him be taught not to make idols: let him either cease or repent. If anyone is an actor or is engaged in theatrical presentations, let him cease or be rejected. As for him who teaches children, it is best that he cease; if he has no [other] craft, let him be allowed to continue. Likewise, the charioteer who competes in the games and those who take part in them, let them cease or be rejected. The gladiator, or one who trains gladiators to fight, or one who engages in the arena hunt, or an official in the gladiatorial enterprise, let him cease or be rejected. He who is a priest of idols, or an idol attendant, let him cease or be rejected.

An enlisted man [lit., a soldier under orders] shall not kill anyone. If he is ordered to, he shall not carry out the order, nor shall he take the [military oath]. He who has the power to execute [lit., of the sword] or the city magistrate who wears the purple, let him cease or be rejected. A catechumen, or one of the faithful who wants to become a soldier, let them be rejected, because they have shown contempt for God.

The prostitute, or the profligate, or the eunuch, or one who does unspeakable things, let them be rejected; they are impure.

A magician is not to be brought to the inquiry. The maker of charms, or the astrologer, or the diviner, or the interpreter of dreams, or the charlatan, or the fringe-cutter, or the phylactery-maker, let them either cease or be rejected.

Someone who is a concubine, if she is a slave and if she brings up her children and remains faithfully attached to one man, let her hear the word; otherwise let her be sent away. The man who has a concubine, let him cease and take a wife according to the law; if, however, he refuses, let him be rejected.

If we have omitted anything, the occupations [in question] will instruct you; for all of us have the Spirit of God.<sup>53</sup>

#### 17. Concerning the Period of Instruction

Catechumens will be under instruction for a period of three years. If someone is zealous and applies himself well to the work of the catechumenate [lit., to the thing], not the period of time but [evidence of] conversion alone shall be judged.

50. Jesus was crucified on the eve of the Sabbath, that is, on Friday evening (a "day" being understood as beginning after sunset rather than after midnight), and was raised on the day after the Sabbath. See Mk 15:42-43; 16:1-6; Mt 27:57-28:7; Lk 23:50-24:7; 19:31-20:25.

51. Words in brackets have been added by the translator for clarification. (The notes for this selection are by Gerhart and Udoh.)

52. See 1 Thess 4:3-8; 1 Cor 7:1-9.

53. See 1 Cor 7:40.