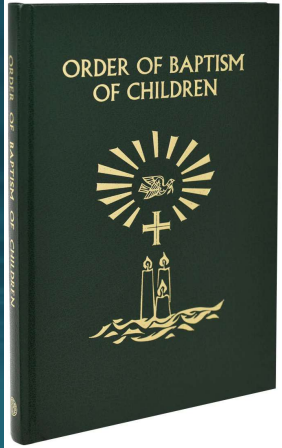


Rev. Thomas Dente, Director  
Worship Office

Sacrament Guidelines  
Archdiocese of Newark

# Order of Baptism of Children

1



## Introductions

- Introduce Staff/Commission
- Previous Guidelines were from 1981
- Not too much has changed in the Rite
- Two Part Workshop – no “break”
- Part I on the Rite – Rev. Thomas Dente
- Part II on Catechesis – Patricia Rodriguez

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Order of Baptism of Children – Sacrament Guidelines  
**PART I: GUIDELINES FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATION**

- A. The Importance of Baptism (1-8)
  - Gateway to life in the Spirit
  - Freed from original and personal sin and reborn as God’s children
  - Made members of Christ and incorporated into the Church
  - Required for other sacraments
- No one can enter the kingdom unless born of water and the Spirit
- Sealed with an indelible seal or mark
- Baptism cannot be repeated or undone



3


- A. The Importance of Baptism cont’d, 1-8
  - Why baptize children? Children should not be deprived of baptism
  - In scripture, “households” were baptized
  - Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine all refer to baptism of children (2-4 C)
- Children are baptized into the faith of the Church
- The power of the Spirit and the faith community will nurture the child
- To bring to completion the reality of the Sacrament, children should afterwards be formed in the faith
- *Note: Faith is a language that we speak to children even if they cannot understand it at first*
- *Mark Searle, Infant Baptism Reconsidered*

**ADULTS**

1. Word
2. Conversion
3. Baptism

**CHILDREN**

1. Baptism
2. Word
3. Conversion



4

### A. Importance of Baptism cont'd, 1-8

- Parents receiving a prenatal diagnosis of a life threatening condition should be assured their child will be baptized without delay
- As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God... Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children...allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism (CCC, 1261)
- *Pastoral Note: The church does not teach "limbo" and this should not be used when ministering to parents who have lost a child before baptism.*



### B. The One to Be Baptized, 9-12

- The term "infants" or "children" refers to those who have not yet reached the age of discretion (age of seven)
- Minors of the age of discretion with the use of reason are initiated through the OCIA
- Disability is never a reason for deferring baptism. Persons lacking the use of reason are regarded as "infants" regarding the age requirement for baptism.
- Only those alive can be baptized. A child who survives an abortion is to be baptized insofar as possible



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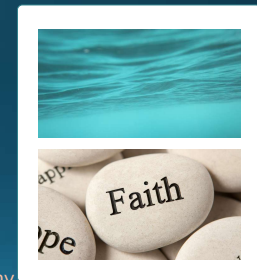
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### C. Parents, 13-29

- It is the duty of the parents to raise the child in the faith
- The act of requesting baptism is itself a sign of faith; the request can come even before the child is born
- Every effort should be made to obtain the consent of both parents to baptize; however, only one is required.
- As a rule, baptism should occur in the parish of the parents
- It is customary to inform the pastor of the parents' parish when baptism takes place elsewhere (but the pastor's permission is not required)
- Parish registration is not required for baptism, but it may be encouraged.
- Registration and/or contributions cannot be prerequisites for baptism
- The parish serves all people living in their boundaries

### C Parents cont'd, 13-29

- Families without permanent domiciles; migrants; families under stress; single parents, etc. seeking baptism require pastoral care. Such cases should be considered on an individual basis.
- There needs to be a founded hope that the child will be raised in the faith by the parents or even someone close (such as grandparents). If this hope is utterly lacking the baptism may be delayed but not denied
  - In this case, a clear process and timeline need to be provided to the parents for any extra preparation.
- Non-Catholic and non-Christian parents should be encouraged to participate in the preparation and ceremony as much as possible, even renewing their baptismal commitment, but they are not required to participate.



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8

### C Parents cont'd, 13-29

- Baptism is never “non-denominational” – we only baptize Catholics!
- Children of unmarried parents, single parents or same sex parents may not be denied baptism, but the parents should be properly disposed, have been prepared and understand their responsibilities
- Although not required for the baptism, couples in invalid marriages could be encouraged to seek validation
- Only the legal parents or guardians can bring a child for baptism (natural parents, adoptive parents, legal guardians) Not other relatives, foster parents, etc.
- All children regardless of parentage can be baptized at regular parish celebrations.
- Parents are first teachers in the faith and are more significant than godparents in passing on the faith.

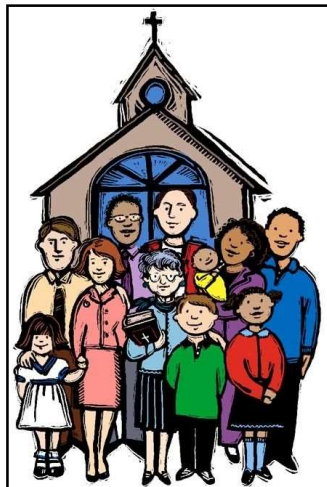
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### D. Godparents, 30-39

- Godparents help the parents profess faith and express it in a Christian life
- Each child may have one godfather and one godmother. Only one is necessary.
- Godparents must be:
  - Fully initiated and at least 16
  - Must not be the parents, natural or adoptive
  - Marriages should be recognized by the church
- Sponsor letters or certificates are not required by law but there should be assurance the godparents meet all requirements. A sample certificate is provided under baptismal resources.
- A baptized non-Catholic may serve as a Christian witness with a Catholic godparent (but a Catholic may not); an Orthodox Christian can serve as a godparent with a Catholic godparent



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### E. The Parish, 40-43

- A child has a right to the love and support of the faith community
- The faith in which the child is baptized is a treasure not only to the family but to the whole church
- The entire community grows in baptismal faith, renews its promises each Easter
- The parish may have a baptismal team to assist in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament
- The pastor must see to it that the parish maintains a registry of all the baptized in the parish

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### F. Liturgical Celebration, 44-56

- Order of Baptism of Children, Second Typical Edition (2020)
- Water should be natural and clean and blessed before or during the ceremony
- Water blessed at Easter Vigil should be used for the entire season; it is not re-blessed at baptism – use invocation over the water in the OBC, 223-224
- Immersion (the body is immersed in the water) or pouring (on the head) can lawfully be used. Be sure water touches the person (not just their hair)
- Essential Rite of Baptism:
  - Immerse or pour three times
  - Invoke the name of the Holy Trinity
- One and the same minister immerses/pours AND pronounces formula; anything else is invalid

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The words with which baptism is conferred in the Latin Church are:

**N, I BAPTIZE YOU  
IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,  
IMMERSE/POUR  
AND OF THE SON,  
IMMERSE/POUR  
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

For the assurance of validity, the formula for baptism must remain unaltered.

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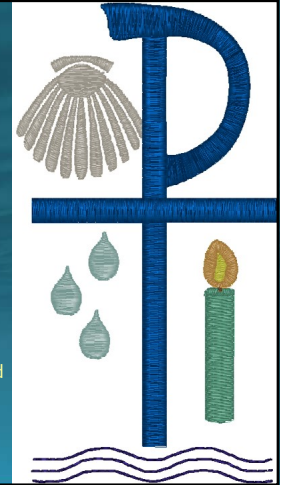
• F. Liturgical Celebration, 44-56

• Minister

- Ordinary minister is bishop, priest or deacon; during Mass, the presider ordinarily confers baptism
  - Normally the presider of the liturgy baptizes each child, but other clergy can assist with anointings, etc. (see Christian Initiation, 15)
  - When there are exceptionally large numbers to be baptized, see OBC, Chap 3
- Permission is to be sought when baptizing outside one's own territory, even of one's parishioners (from the diocese and local pastor as needed)
  - The baptism is recorded in the territory where it occurs

• When Baptism is to Occur

- Ordinarily on a Sunday, when the resurrection is commemorated
- It may occur during Mass, but not too often
- Outside Mass, baptism should follow principles of good liturgy (hospitality, musicians, readers, servers)



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• F. Liturgical Celebration cont'd, 44-56

• When Baptism is to Occur

- As far as possible, there should be a common celebration of Baptism on the same day for all newborn babies. Except for a just cause, Baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church. Individual baptisms are to be discouraged.
- Baptism should be celebrated in a common celebration with the attendance of a large number of the faithful.
- Lent is a time of preparation for baptism so celebrations are discouraged but not forbidden, especially in cases of emergency

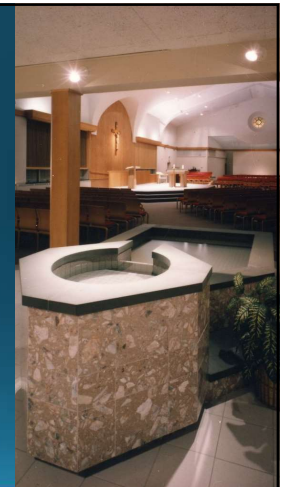


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• F. Liturgical Celebration cont'd, 44-56

• Where Baptism is to Occur

- Normally in a parish church at the baptismal font in the baptistery or it may occur using a vessel in the sanctuary
- The order calls for a wide use of the worship space which should be adhered to as much as possible:
  - (door of church/ambo area for the word/baptistery for baptism/altar for concluding rites/etc.)
- Baptism at Mass
  - See 257-297 of the OBC for details
  - When ritual Masses are not permitted, Mass of the day is used (e.g. Solemnities, Holy Days of Obligation, etc.)
  - On Sundays, the ritual Mass for baptism, when permitted, would normally be used at non-regularly scheduled parish Masses



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## G. Emergency Baptism, 57-62

- A so called “emergency” baptism would occur when a child is in danger of death, even if it is not imminent or inevitable. Baptism should take place without delay
- It does not need to occur in a church. An ordinary minister, catechist or trained lay person may perform the baptism (See OBC, Chap 5)
- The pastor of the territory where it occurred must be informed to make a record of the baptism which is kept in the local parish
- Hospitals and other institutions do not keep baptismal records nor do they print certificates

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## G. Emergency Baptism *cont'd*, 57-62

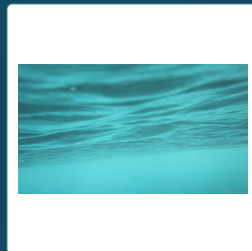
- If the child survives, the Order of Bringing a Baptized Child to Church is used. (OBC, Chap 6) Water is not poured. Neither “rebaptism” nor “conditional baptism” is to take place.
- The parish where the baptism took place should be notified when the date of the rites was supplied
- The family must receive a certificate from the parish of baptism so they will know where the record is kept



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## H. Baptism Register, 63

The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and immediately record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, minister, parents, sponsors, Christian witnesses (if any) and proxies (if any), the date and place of the conferral of the baptism and the date and place of birth.



19

Repent and be baptized,  
every one of you,  
in the name of  
Jesus Christ  
for the forgiveness  
of your sins;  
and you will receive  
the gift of the  
holy Spirit.

*Acts 2:38*



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