

# THE ORDER OF BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

ENGLISH TRANSLATION ACCORDING  
TO THE SECOND TYPICAL EDITION

For Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America

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## CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation all who have been freed from the power of darkness and have died, been buried and been raised with Christ, receive the Spirit of filial adoption and celebrate with the entire People of God the memorial of the Lord's Death and Resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

For, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, they are formed into the People of God, and, having received the remission of all their sins and been rescued from the power of darkness, they are brought to the status of adopted sons and daughters,<sup>2</sup> being made a new creation by water and the Holy Spirit. Hence they are called, and indeed are, children of God.<sup>3</sup> Sealed with the gift of the same Spirit in Confirmation, they are more perfectly configured to the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit, so that bearing witness to Christ before the world, they bring the Body of Christ to its full stature without delay.<sup>4</sup> Finally, participating in the Eucharistic assembly (*synaxis*), they eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, so that they may receive eternal life<sup>5</sup> and show forth the unity of God's people. Offering themselves with Christ, they take part in the universal sacrifice, which is

1. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes*, no. 14.

2. Cf. Colossians 1:13; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5. Cf. also Council of Trent, sess. 6., *Decr. de justificatione*, cap. 4; Denz.-Schön. 1524.

3. Cf. 1 John 3:1.

4. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes*, no. 36.

5. Cf. John 6:55.

the entire city of the redeemed offered to God through the great High Priest;<sup>6</sup> they also pray that, through a fuller outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the whole human race come into the unity of God's family.<sup>7</sup> Thus the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation so work together that they bring to full stature the Christian faithful, who exercise in the Church and in the world the mission of the entire Christian people.<sup>8</sup>

Baptism, the door to life and to the Kingdom, is the first Sacrament of the New Law, which Christ offered to all that they might have eternal life<sup>9</sup> and which, together with the Gospel, he later entrusted to his Church, when he commanded his Apostles: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup> Therefore Baptism is first and foremost the Sacrament of that faith by which human beings, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, respond to the Gospel of Christ. That is why the Church believes that there is nothing more ancient and nothing more proper for herself than to urge all—catechumens, parents of children who are to be baptized, and godparents—to that true and active faith by which, as they hold fast to Christ, they enter into or confirm the New Covenant. In fact, the pastoral instruction of catechumens and the preparation of parents, as well as the celebration of God's Word and the profession of baptismal faith, are all ordered to this end.

Furthermore, Baptism is the Sacrament by which human beings are incorporated into the Church and are built up together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit,<sup>11</sup> and into a royal priesthood and a holy nation;<sup>12</sup> it is also a sacramental bond of unity linking all who are

6. Cf. Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 10, 6; PL 41, 284. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, no. 11; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, no. 2.

7. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, no. 28.

8. Cf. *ibidem*, no. 31.

9. Cf. John 3:5.

10. Matthew 28:19.

11. Cf. Ephesians 2:22.

12. Cf. 1 Peter 2:9.

signed by it.<sup>13</sup> Because of that unchangeable effect (which the very celebration of the Sacrament in the Latin Liturgy makes clear when the baptized are anointed with Chrism, in the presence of the People of God), the rite of Baptism is held in highest honor by all Christians. Nor is it lawful for anyone to repeat it once it has been validly celebrated, even by separated brethren.

Moreover, the washing with water in the word of life,<sup>14</sup> which is what Baptism is, cleanses human beings of every stain of sin, both original and personal, and makes them sharers in the divine nature<sup>15</sup> and in filial adoption.<sup>16</sup> For Baptism, as is proclaimed in the prayers for the blessing of water, is the washing of regeneration<sup>17</sup> of the children of God and of birth from on high. The invocation of the Most Holy Trinity over those who are to be baptized has the effect that, signed with this name, they are consecrated to the Trinity and enter into fellowship with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the high point for which the biblical readings, the prayer of the community, and the threefold profession of faith prepare, and to which they lead.

Baptism, far superior to the purifications of the Old Law, produces these effects by virtue of the mystery of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. Those who are baptized are united with Christ in a death like his, are buried with him in death,<sup>18</sup> and also in him are given life and are raised up.<sup>19</sup> For in Baptism nothing other than the Paschal Mystery is recalled and accomplished, because in it human beings pass from the death of sin into life. Therefore, the joy of the resurrection should shine forth in the celebration of Baptism, especially when it takes place during the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday.

13. Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 22.

14. Cf. Ephesians 5:26.

15. Cf. 2 Peter 1:4.

16. Cf. Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5.

17. Cf. Titus 3:5.

18. Cf. Romans 6:5, 4.

19. Cf. Ephesians 2:5-6.

# ORDER OF BAPTISM FOR SEVERAL CHILDREN

## **Rite of Receiving the Children**

Baptism should be celebrated, insofar as possible, on a Sunday, the day on which the Church recalls the Paschal Mystery, and indeed in a common celebration for all the newly born, and with the attendance of a large number of the faithful, or at least of the relatives, friends, and neighbors, and with their active participation.

It is for the father and mother, together with the godparents, to present the child to the Church for Baptism.

If there are very many children to be baptized, and there are several Priests or Deacons present, these may assist the celebrant in performing those rites that are indicated in the text.

The faithful sing a suitable Psalm or hymn, if circumstances allow. Meanwhile, the Priest or Deacon celebrant, wearing an alb or surplice and stole, and even a cope, in a festive color, goes with the ministers to the door of the church, or to that part of the church where the parents and godparents are gathered with those to be baptized.

The celebrant greets those present, especially the parents and godparents, recalling in a few words the joy with which the parents received their children as a gift from God, who is the source of all life and who now wishes to bestow his own life on them. He may use these or similar words:

Dear parents and godparents:

Your families have experienced great joy at the birth of your children, and the Church shares your happiness.

Today this joy has brought you to the Church to give thanks to God for the gift of your children and to celebrate a new birth in the waters of Baptism.

This community rejoices with you, for today the number of those baptized in Christ will be increased, and we offer you our support in raising your children in the practice of the faith.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, let us now prepare ourselves to participate in this celebration, listening to God's Word, praying for these children and their families, and renewing our commitment to the Lord and to his people.

The celebrant first asks the parents of each child:

What name do you give (or: have you given) your child?

Parents:

N.

Celebrant:

What do you ask of God's Church for N.?

Parents:

**Baptism.**

The celebrant may use other words in this dialogue.

The first reply may be given by another person if, according to local custom, this person has the right to give the name.

In the second reply, the parents may use other words: e.g., Faith or The grace of Christ or Entry into the Church or Eternal life.

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If there are many to be baptized, the celebrant may ask all the parents at once for the names of their children:

What name do you give (or: have you given) your child?

Each family replies in turn. The second question may be put to all at once in the plural.

**Celebrant:**

What do you ask of God's Church for your children?

**All:**

**Baptism.**

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**Then the celebrant addresses the parents in these or similar words:**

In asking for Baptism for your children,  
you are undertaking the responsibility  
of raising them in the faith,  
so that, keeping God's commandments,  
they may love the Lord and their neighbor as Christ has taught us.  
Do you understand this responsibility?

**Parents:**

**We do.**

This reply is given by each family individually; but if the number of children to be baptized is very large, the reply may be given by all together.

**Then turning to the godparents, the celebrant asks in these or similar words:**

Are you ready to help the parents of these children in their duty?

**All the godparents together:**

**We are.**

**Then the celebrant continues, saying:**

**N. and N. (or: Dear children),**

the Church of God receives you with great joy.

In her name I sign you with the Sign of the Cross of Christ our Savior;  
then, after me, your parents (and godparents) will do the same.

And, without saying anything, he signs each of the children on the forehead. Afterwards he invites the parents, and if it seems appropriate, the godparents, to do the same.

The celebrant invites the parents, godparents, and others present to take part in the celebration of the Word of God. If circumstances permit, a procession to the appointed place takes place with singing (e.g., Psalm 85 [84]:7-9ab).

PSALM 23 (22)

The LORD is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.

Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me;  
he revives my soul.

He guides me along the right path,  
for the sake of his name.

Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,  
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.

Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

You have prepared a table before me  
in the sight of my foes.

My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life.

In the LORD's own house shall I dwell  
for length of days unending.

## Celebration of Baptism

When they have come to the font, the celebrant briefly reminds those present of the wonderful plan of God, who willed to sanctify the human soul and body through water. He may do this in these or similar words:

**A** Let us pray, dear brothers and sisters,  
that the Lord God Almighty may bestow new life on these children  
by water and the Holy Spirit.

Or:

**B** Dear brothers and sisters,  
you know that God graciously bestows  
his abundant life through the sacrament of water  
on those who believe.  
Let us then raise our minds to him,  
and with one heart pray  
that he may be pleased to pour out his grace from this font  
upon these chosen ones.

#### BLESSING OF WATER AND INVOCATION OF GOD OVER THE WATER

Then, turning to the font, the celebrant says the following Blessing  
(outside Easter Time):

O God, who by invisible power  
accomplish a wondrous effect  
through sacramental signs  
and who in many ways have prepared water, your creation,  
to show forth the grace of Baptism;

O God, whose Spirit  
in the first moments of the world's creation  
hovered over the waters,  
so that the very substance of water  
would even then take to itself the power to sanctify;

O God, who by the outpouring of the flood  
foreshadowed regeneration,  
so that from the mystery of one and the same element of water  
would come an end to vice and a beginning of virtue;

O God, who caused the children of Abraham  
to pass dry-shod through the Red Sea,  
so that the chosen people,  
set free from slavery to Pharaoh,  
would prefigure the people of the baptized;

O God, whose Son,  
baptized by John in the waters of the Jordan,  
was anointed with the Holy Spirit,  
and, as he hung upon the Cross,  
gave forth water from his side along with blood,  
and after his Resurrection, commanded his disciples:  
“Go forth, teach all nations, baptizing them  
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”  
look now, we pray, upon the face of your Church  
and graciously unseal for her the fountain of Baptism.

May this water receive by the Holy Spirit  
the grace of your Only Begotten Son,  
so that human nature, created in your image  
and washed clean through the Sacrament of Baptism  
from all the squalor of the life of old,  
may be found worthy to rise to the life of newborn children  
through water and the Holy Spirit.

*The celebrant touches the water with his right hand and continues:*

May the power of the Holy Spirit,  
O Lord, we pray,  
come down through your Son  
into the fullness of this font,  
so that all who have been buried with Christ  
by Baptism into death  
may rise again to life with him.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

*All:*

**Amen.**

*Other optional formulas may be used.*

*During Easter Time, however, if the baptismal water has been consecrated at the Easter Vigil, so that the Baptism may not lack the element of thanksgiving and petition, the blessing and invocation of God over the water takes place in accordance with the formulas found in the *Order of Baptism*, using the textual variation given at the end of these same formulas.*

# BIBLICAL READINGS

*(Lectionary for Mass, nos. 756–760)*

## Readings from the Old Testament

**1**    *Ex 17:3-7: Give us water to drink (Ex 17:2).*

A reading from the Book of Exodus

In their thirst for water,  
the people grumbled against Moses,  
saying, “Why did you ever make us leave Egypt?

Was it just to have us die here of thirst  
with our children and our livestock?”

So Moses cried out to the LORD,  
“What shall I do with this people?

A little more and they will stone me!”

The LORD answered Moses,  
“Go over there in front of the people,  
along with some of the elders of Israel,  
holding in your hand, as you go,  
the staff with which you struck the river.

I will be standing there in front of you on the rock in Horeb.

Strike the rock, and the water will flow from it  
for the people to drink.”

This Moses did, in the presence of the elders of Israel.

The place was called Massah and Meribah,  
because the children of Israel quarreled there  
and tested the LORD, saying,

“Is the LORD in our midst or not?”

The word of the Lord.

**2**     *Ez 36:24-28: I shall pour clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities.*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord GOD:

I will take you away from among the nations,  
gather you from all the foreign lands,  
and bring you back to your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you  
to cleanse you from all your impurities,  
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you,  
taking from your bodies your stony hearts  
and giving you natural hearts.

I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes,  
careful to observe my decrees.

You shall live in the land I gave your father;  
you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

The word of the Lord.

**3**     *Ez 47:1-9, 12: I saw water flowing from the temple, and all who were touched by it were saved (see Roman Missal, antiphon for blessing and sprinkling holy water during Easter Time).*

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel

The angel brought me, Ezekiel,  
back to the entrance of the temple of the Lord,  
and I saw water flowing out  
from beneath the threshold of the temple toward the east,  
for the façade of the temple was toward the east;  
the water flowed down from the right side of the temple,  
south of the altar.

He led me outside by the north gate,  
and around to the outer gate facing the east,  
where I saw water trickling from the right side.

Then when he had walked off to the east  
with a measuring cord in his hand,

he measured off a thousand cubits  
and had me wade through the water,  
which was ankle-deep.

He measured off another thousand  
and once more had me wade through the water,  
which was now knee-deep.

Again he measured off a thousand and had me wade;  
the water was up to my waist.

Once more he measured off a thousand,  
but there was now a river through which I could not wade;  
for the water had risen so high it had become a river  
that could not be crossed except by swimming.

He asked me, "Have you seen this, son of man?"

Then he brought me to the bank of the river, where he had me sit.

Along the bank of the river I saw very many trees on both sides.

He said to me,

"This water flows into the eastern district down upon the Arabah,  
and empties into the sea, the salt waters, which it makes fresh.

Wherever the river flows,

every sort of living creature that can multiply shall live,  
and there shall be abundant fish,

for wherever this water comes the sea shall be made fresh.

Along both banks of the river, fruit trees of every kind shall grow;  
their leaves shall not fade, nor their fruit fail.

Every month they shall bear fresh fruit,

for they shall be watered by the flow from the sanctuary.

Their fruit shall serve for food, and their leaves for medicine."

The word of the Lord.