

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:

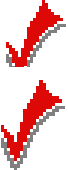
INITIATION AND REGENERATION

Part Vb:
Baptism



Baptism: Initiation and Regeneration

All Christians believe in the role of baptism in the life of the Christian. The differences which exist are differences of emphasis--of the necessity of baptism--and not of the call to be baptized. Catholic Christians believe that in the sacrament of baptism the individual is both

 regenerated through water and the Holy Spirit, and truly incorporated into the Church of Jesus Christ.

John 3:5

Jesus answered (Nicodemus), “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

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,

Matthew 3:11

I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. **He will baptize you** with the holy Spirit and fire.

Galatians 3:25-27

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a disciplinarian. For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of **you who were baptized** into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit **we were all baptized** into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Acts 2:37-38

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, “What are we to do, my brothers?” Peter (said) to them, “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 10:44-47

While Peter was still speaking these things, the holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the word. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the holy Spirit should have been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they could hear them speaking in tongues and glorifying God. Then Peter responded, “Can anyone withhold the water for **baptizing these people**, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?”

Titus 3:5

... not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through **the bath of rebirth (baptism)** and renewal by the holy Spirit.

Acts 8:11-13

They paid attention to him (Simon Magus) because he had astounded them by his magic for a long time, but once they began to believe Philip as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **men and women alike were baptized**. Even Simon himself believed and, after being baptized, became devoted to Philip.

1 Peter 3:20-21

God patiently waited in the days of Noah during the building of the ark, in which a few persons, eight in all, were **saved through water**. This **prefigured baptism, which saves you now**.

Romans 6:3-4

Or are you unaware that **we who were baptized** into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him **through baptism into death**, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12

You were **buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

The teaching authority of the Church, the Magisterium, has clearly stated the role of baptism in the life of the Christian.

Lateran Council IV, 1215

Infallibly defined that baptism was a sacrament of the Church.

Council of Lyons II, 1274

Infallibly redefined that baptism was one of the seven sacraments.

Council of Trent, 1545 - 1563

Again infallibly defined the seven sacraments listing baptism as the opening gateway and foundation of the sacraments.

Infant Baptism

Catholic Christians among other denominational Christians, e.g., Anglicans, Episcopalians, Lutherans, etc., believe in the efficacy and practice of baptizing infants.

Acts 2:38-39

Peter (said) to them, “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. For the promise is made **to you and to your children** and to all those far off, whomever the Lord our God will call.”



The New Testament speaks of the baptism of “whole households” which in the normal Greek usage of the time included children.

1 Corinthians 1:16

I (Paul) **baptized the household** of Stephanas also ...

Acts 11:13-14

He related to us how he had seen (the) angel standing in his house, saying, “Send someone to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, who will speak words to you by which **you and all your household will be saved.**”

Acts 16:15

After **she** (Lydia of Thyatira) **and her household had been baptized**, she offered us an invitation...

Acts 16:30-32

Then he (the jailer) brought them (Paul and Silas) out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and **you and your household will be saved.**” So they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house.

Acts 18:8

Crispus, the synagogue official, came to believe in the Lord **along with his entire household.**



To the Colossians, Paul paralleled baptism and circumcision. Circumcision was normally administered to children eight days after birth.

Colossians 2:11-12

In him **you were also circumcised** with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were **buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.



To the Corinthians, Paul recalled that just as all the Jews of the Exodus (including children) were baptized into Moses by passing through the Red Sea, they were actually being blessed by Christ.

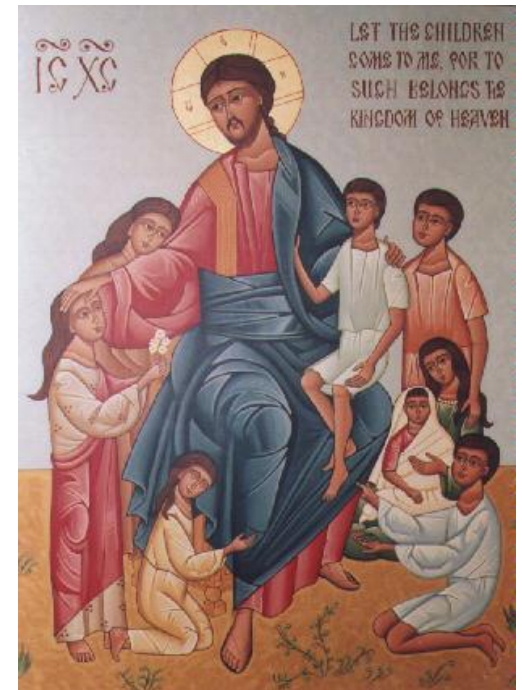
1 Corinthians 10:1-4

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, and **all of them were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea**. All ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was the Christ.

In Mark's Gospel, we have Jesus' own teaching on children.

Mark 10:13-16

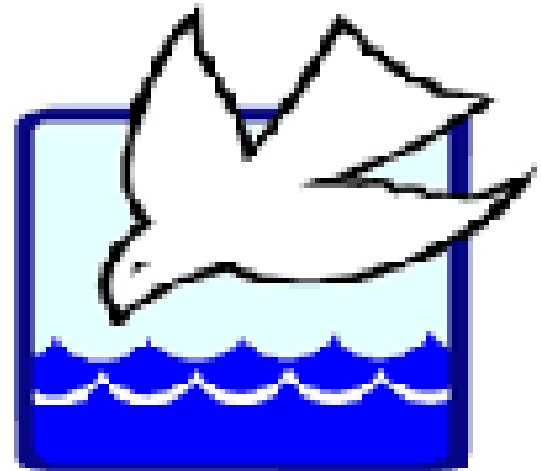
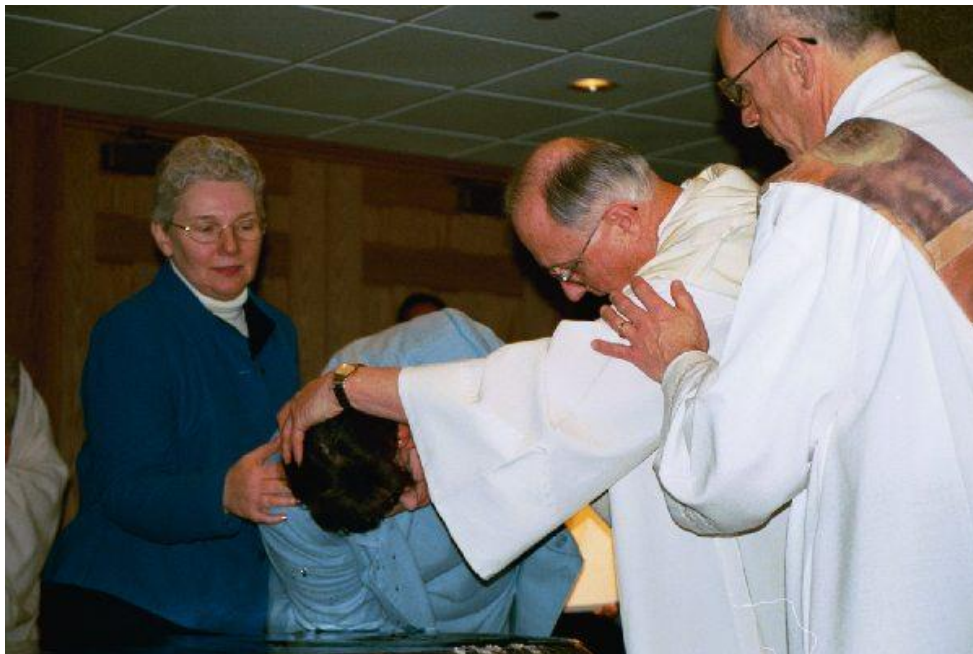
And people were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, **“Let the children come to me**; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” ... Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.



The Catholic Church teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation after the promulgation of the Gospel *for everyone*, both children and adults.

John 3:5

Jesus answered (Nicodemus), “Amen, amen, I say to you, **no one** can enter the kingdom of God without being **born of water and Spirit.**”



It is frequently asked by non-believers how an infant is capable of making an act of faith in order to receive baptism. The response of the Catholic Church is to follow the Biblical example of Christ. Jesus accepted the faith of others as an occasion of salvation, forgiveness and healing of another. The Church has always done likewise. In infant baptism, the faith of parents and sponsors is required.



Mark 2:1-5

When Jesus returned to Capernaum ... They came bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. Unable to get near Jesus because of the crowd, they opened up the roof above him. After they had broken through, they let down the mat on which the paralytic was lying. When **Jesus saw their faith**, he said to the paralytic, “Child, *your sins are forgiven.*”



Matthew 8:5-13

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully.” He said to him, “I will come and cure him.” The centurion said in reply, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.” ... When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, “Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found *such faith*.” ... And Jesus said to the centurion, “You may go; **as you have believed, let it be done for you.**” And at that very hour (his) servant was healed.

The constant teaching of the Church attests to the baptism of infants.

Pope Zosimus (417 - 418)



Approved a teaching of a local council at Carthage which condemned those who denied baptism to newborn infants.

Pope Celestine I (422 - 432)

Taught that both children and infants need the sacrament of regeneration.



Pope Innocent II (1130 - 1143) and the Council of Lateran IV

Condemned those who denied the baptism of children.



Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216)

Condemned those who said that baptism of children was useless.



Pope Clement V (1305 - 1314) in the Council of Vienne

Defended the necessity of baptism of children.



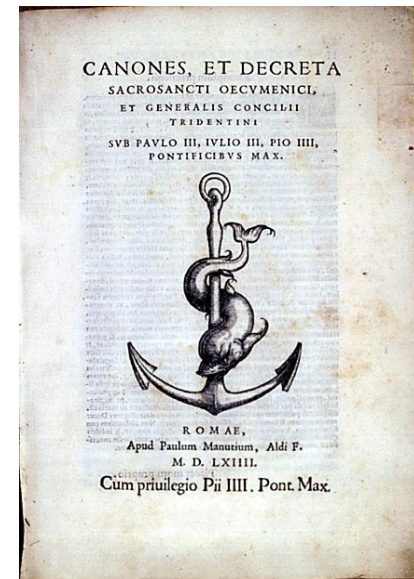
Pope Eugene IV (1431 - 1447) in the Council of Florence

Defended the necessity of baptism of children.



The Council of Trent (1545 - 1563)

In a number of related canons, defined the absolute necessity of baptism for both children and adults.



Baptism by Water: Immersion, Pouring, Sprinkling

All Christians believe that baptism by water is essential to the administration of the sacrament.

John 3:5

Jesus answered (Nicodemus), “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of **water** and Spirit.”

The Catholic Church believes that a “washing of the body with natural water” is what is required for valid baptism.

Matthew 28:19

... **baptizing them** in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is **baptized** will be saved.

Acts 8:36,38

As they traveled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?” ... Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and **he baptized him**.

Acts 10:47

“Can anyone withhold the **water for baptizing** these people, who have received the holy Spirit even as we have?”

Titus 3:5

He saved us through the **bath of rebirth** and renewal by the holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:26

... to sanctify her, **cleansing her by the bath of water** with the word,

1 Corinthians 10:2

... all of them were **baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.**

1 Peter 3:21

This **prefigured baptism**, which saves you now.



Ancient Baptisteries



The Apostolic Fathers attested to the practice in the early church.

The Didache (Syria, 70-110) (Ch 7)

“Regarding baptism, baptize thus. After giving the foregoing instructions, ‘Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ (Mt 28:19) in running water. But, if you have no running water, baptize in any other; and if you cannot in cold water, then in warm. But, if the one is lacking, pour the other three times on the head ‘in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit’.”



Justin (Martyr) (Rome, 100-165), First Apology, Ch. 61

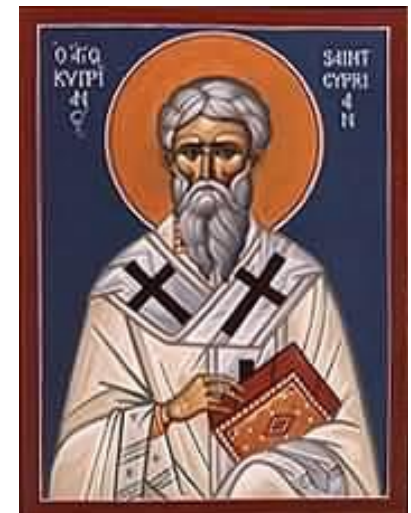
“They (those to be baptized) then are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water ... The reason for this we have received from the Apostles.”



From the earliest times in the Church, baptism was generally administered by immersion. The word *baptizain* means to immerse. The question of the mode of using water was addressed in the early Church.

Cyprian (Carthage, 200-258): *Letters*, No. 69:12

“You have asked ... whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians, for that they are not to be washed, but sprinkled, with the saving water. ... I think that the divine benefits can in no respect be mutilated and weakened; nor can anything less occur in that case where, with full and entire faith both of the giver and receiver, is accepted what is drawn from the divine gifts ... it ought not to trouble any one that sick people seem to be sprinkled or effused, when they obtain the Lord's grace.”



There are examples in the history of the Church of baptism being administered by sprinkling. It was probably the mode of baptizing that the Apostles used on Pentecost in order to baptize three thousand men.

From the Apostolic period to the 4th century:

baptism was administered through total immersion except in cases of necessity.

From the 4th century to the 8th century:

baptism by partial immersion in a "baptistery" began, used with a pouring of water.

From the 6th century to the 11th century:

baptism of children was effected by totally immersing them in a basin or sink; for adults, custom and use varied.

From the 11th to the 13th century:

baptism of children horizontally was the custom in the manner of bath-taking.

From the 13th century to the 14th century:

baptism was effected both by total immersion and partial immersion, and pouring became the custom in some places.

From the 15th and 16th centuries:

baptism was effected more frequently by pouring and immersion became rare.

From the 17th century on:

baptism by immersion was hardly used except in some Uniate churches.

By the 19th century:

pouring almost universally prevailed, even among the Uniate churches.

Today: as always, the Catholic Church insists on water for baptism, but the manner of using the water is not a problem: given circumstances and availability, Catholics can choose the manner of water baptism.

End of
The Sacraments, Baptism, Part Vb

Go to
The Sacraments, Confirmation, Part Vc