

Importance of the Pastoral Introduction

There are in fact two Introductions: one for Christian Initiation in general and a second for the Baptism of Children. These Introductions are rich in information and pastoral advice for Priests, Deacons, and Catechists and other lay persons.

The Introduction for the Baptism of Children provides a brief summary of the Church's teaching on Baptism as outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It also outlines what is needed for the pastoral preparation for Baptism.

Introduction Outline

1. VARIOUS ROLES AND MINISTRIES, NOS. 4 TO 7:

- The People of God, represented by the local community, no. 4;
- The Parents of the child, no. 5;
- Godparents, no. 6;
- Pastors, no. 7.

2. TIME AND PLACE OF BAPTISM, NOS. 8 TO 14:

- Pastoral sensitivity in planning the time of Baptism, no. 8;
- Paschal character of Baptism, no. 9;
- Celebration of the Church's faith, no. 10;
- Place of Celebration, nos. 11 to 13.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE RITE, NOS. 15 TO 22:

- Reception of the child, no. 16;
- Celebration of the Word, no. 17;
- Elements of the Baptism itself, no. 18;
- Concluding Rites, no. 19;
- Short Order of Baptism, nos. 20 to 22.

4. ADAPTATIONS BY THE CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS, NOS. 23 TO 26.

5. ADAPTATIONS BY THE MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENT, NOS. 27 TO 31:

- Baptism during the Easter Vigil, no. 28;
- Baptism during Sunday Mass, no. 29;
- Various circumstances, no. 31.

Deacons

The Order of Baptism within Mass must be celebrated by the Priest who celebrates the Mass. In the celebration of Baptism within Mass, Deacons exercise their customary roles of proclaiming the Gospel and the petitions of the Prayer of the Faithful as well as service at the altar. They may also invoke the names of the Saints in the Litany. After the Baptism, especially if there are a number of children, they may assist with the placing of the white garment and the lighting of the baptismal candle.

In many parishes, Deacons celebrate the Baptism of Children without Mass. Chapters I and III address this situation.



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The Order of Baptism of Children



Introducing the Revised Ritual



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INTRODUCING THE REVISED RITUAL

Introduction

The importance of Baptism cannot be overrated; from Baptism flows the entire sacramental system left to us from Christ. In addition, Baptism is the gateway to the Christian life and salvation, union with God through Christ and rebirth to new life. The words of the Gospel attest to this importance: “No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit” (John 3.5). For an overview of the Church’s understanding and teaching on Baptism, see *Christian Initiation: General Introduction* (pgs xi–xviii), *The Order of Baptism of Children: Introduction* (pgs xviii–xxvi) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1213–1284. The Church has always understood that children are not to be deprived of Baptism, inasmuch as they are baptized in the faith of the Church herself, which is proclaimed by the parents and godparents and the others present. Since Baptism is a sharing in the life of the risen Christ which is lived in a parish community, parents must intend (are expected) to raise their child in the practice of the faith as outlined in the Code of Canon Law, c. 868.2 – that there is a well-founded hope that the infant will be raised in the practice of the Catholic faith.

Baptism of Children

This revised Ritual for Baptism concerns “children” or “infants,” those who cannot profess the faith for themselves since they have not yet reached the age of reason. The Baptism of children who have reached the age of reason is outlined in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, which includes children of catechetical age.

New Translation

This Ritual is a new translation of the Order of Baptism in keeping with the second generation of translations of the Roman Rite into the English language. This revised Ritual retains the easy-to-use order and chapters of the previous 1989 edition. This means that the *Latin typical edition* has been re-ordered for pastoral use in English Canada.

Ministers of Baptism

The Ritual is intended for use by Bishops, Priests and Deacons as the ordinary ministers of Baptism, and by Catechists or other lay people who are commissioned by the local ordinary to celebrate Baptism when a Priest or Deacon is not available.¹

Contents

The contents remain the same and include:

Chapter I – Baptism for Several Children without Mass

Chapter II – Baptism for Several Children within Mass

Chapter III – Baptism for One Child without Mass

Chapter IV – Baptism for One Child within Mass

Chapter V – Baptism for a Large Number of Children

Chapter VI – Baptism of Children to be Used by Catechists in the Absence of a Priest or Deacon

Chapter VII – Baptism of Children in Danger of Death in the Absence of a Priest or Deacon

Chapter VIII – Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church

Chapter IX – Various Texts for Use in the Celebration of Baptism for Children. These include Biblical Readings; models for the Prayer of the Faithful; alternate prayers for the Exorcism and Blessing of Water; etc.

Chapter X – Appendix

Implementation

The use of this revised Ritual is mandatory from Easter Sunday, 4 April 2021, and it replaces any other English-language translation. It may be used upon publication.

Improvements

- As in the 1989 edition, the *Latin typical edition* has been pastorally re-ordered for use in Canada. For easy reference, the paragraph numbers of the Latin edition are noted in the right-hand margin.
- All the options for the Blessing of Water are printed in place, and there will be almost no need to find texts in other pages or the appendix.

- Psalm texts are now included for two of the processions that take place during the Rite: **1)** Procession from the entrance to the place of the celebration of the Word (Psalm 85); **2)** Procession to the Baptistry (Psalm 23). These are in addition to the text for the Procession to the Altar.
- Four short Gospel passages are inserted in place for Baptisms celebrated without Mass: Matthew 28.18-20; Mark 1.9-11; Mark 10.13-16; and John 3.1-6. Other Biblical readings appear in Chapter IX.
- More complete rubrics and texts needed for the Introductory Rites when Baptism is celebrated within Mass are provided. These include the Greeting and Welcoming of the participants.
- The Collect and the Prayer after Communion from the *Ritual Mass for Baptism* are included for use in the celebration of Baptism within Mass in Ordinary Time.
- Two formulae for the Renunciation of Sin are included.
- The new translation of the prayer for Anointing before Baptism changes the order of the text to emphasize the Christological meaning of the anointing: “May the strength of Christ the Saviour protect you. As a sign of this we anoint you with the oil of salvation in the same Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.”
- The prayer for the Blessing of Water is the revised text contained in the Roman Missal for the Easter Vigil.
- The Appendix contains a Litany including Saints from the liturgical calendar proper to Canada.

Improvements in the Translation

- Dialogue with the Parents: Instead of asking if they clearly understand what they are undertaking, the revised translation asks: “Do you understand this responsibility?”
- The Signing of the Forehead: The revised text incorporates the change mandated by Pope Benedict XVI: “N., the Church of God receives you with great joy.”²
- The Lord’s Prayer: The translation of the introduction makes it more obvious that Confirmation and the Eucharist are future steps in the Christian Initiation of the child.

¹ See Code of Canon Law, c. 861 §2.

² 22 February 2013, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prot. N. 44/13/L.